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THE RESENTMENT



BY
MARY ETTA SPENCER

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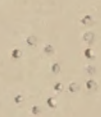
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RESENTMENT

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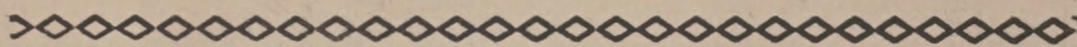
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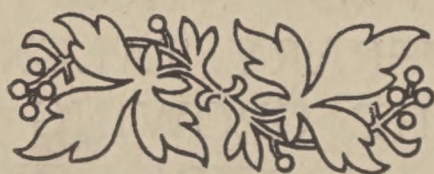
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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY
MOTHER FROM WHOM I DERIVED
MY LITERARY TALENT, AND
TO THE GROWING BOYS
AND GIRLS OF
MY RACE

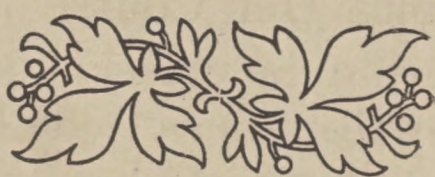




THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

It is not my desire to write this book merely to show my ability to write or to win fame as a writer, but that I may write some little something that would inspire some boy or girl of my race to be willing to endure struggle, to become a man or woman of worth by refusing to stay on the ground floor, and thereby be classed as a "good-for-nothing," by willingness to do hard and honest labor, by doing well whatever task is assigned you, by unselfish deeds, by preservation of virtue, by alienation of vice, by determining your course, and if that course proves right, let nothing turn you from it; that determination backed by will-power and sticking to it through thick and thin.

MARY ETTA SPENCER.



CONTENTS

Little Silas	7- 13
The Awakening	15- 26
At Work in Earnest	27- 54
Seeing City Life	55- 73
“Net” Determines Her Course	74- 84
Step by Step	85-101
“I Shall Not Always Be Called A Nigger”	103-118
Obstacles	119-141
Two Great Events	143-173
Let Me Build My House By The Side of The Road and Be A Friend to Man	175-192
The Reward	193-208
Two Great Men Meet	209-216

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE SILAS

"Come on, come on there, boy, you must think you are owner of half this county instead of being a good-for-nothing "nigger." Come, hurry up, we have got lots of work to do today, with the sun two hours high already. And, by the way, a gentleman, a Mr. Walker, will be here today. He is one of the richest ranchmen in the West. Don't for goodness sake, forget your manners, and please remember to take off your hat to him. He is a great man, and your kind must honor him," said Mr. Baxter with a twinkle in his eye.

Mr. Baxter was a wealthy white Southern farmer. He was talking to Silas Miller, a little colored boy.

Silas had been hired to Mr. Baxter by his father about a year before our story begins. He was then a boy barely fourteen years old, small and delicate for his age. His ✓

✓ mother died when he was twelve years old, leaving four children--Silas being the oldest. Two years later, his father married again.

It was the custom in the rural districts of the South for parents to hire their children out as soon as they were old enough to do a little work for small sums of money, monthly; and, very often, for food and clothing only. Silas, not being so strong, was not put to work so soon, but his father hired him to Mr. Baxter when he was fourteen years old, to do light work. Poor little fellow; at first he was so lonely, there being no children there. He missed the merry fun-making of his little brothers and sister.

He was made to sleep over the kitchen stairs, away from the other part of the house. He would have died from fright had he not believed in God. On entering the dark room (he was not allowed to have a light because they were afraid he would set the house afire through carelessness), he would kneel beside the bed and ask God to send "Mamma" to stay with him. Such childish faith! In the next few moments he would be in dreamland.

Humble and poor as they were at home, this child would have given worlds (had

they been his to give) to have remained with them.

He was permitted to go home two Sundays in each month. He looked forward to these days as the happiest days of his young life.

Silas had lived here over a year, amidst luxury and wealth. He did not have to work hard, yet little consideration was shown him, the fact being he was only a Negro boy.

At work, he was a little slow, but what he did was well done. Silas is an unusually bright and quick-witted boy, and I doubt whether he shall be contented to work as a laborer for other farmers long. Of course, we don't want him to know what we think of him; it would make him feel important, yet we all love him and would hate to part with him," said Mr. Baxter in speaking of him to his friends.

Little did Mr. Baxter know that he had said the words that, in years to come, would make Silas Miller one of the richest and most independent men of his race.

While at work that morning, hot tears ran down Silas' face, his heart ached. "Why must I be reminded every day that I am a Negro, I try so hard to do what is right?

But, it is always "Nigger." He looked at his dark, brown-skinned hands and wondered why God made some white and others black. Stamping his foot upon the ground, he said, "But there is one thing certain, I shall not always be called a 'nigger,' I am going to be a business man, and men will take their hats off—well, we'll take our hats off to each other."

Dinner over, Mrs. Baxter asked her husband to let Silas stay and help her. She wanted him to motor to town with her and then help with the supper. Silas was elated because he was very anxious to see this man that they all seemed so excited about.

Dressed in his Sunday clothes, with a white straw hat and a black tie, he was a picture, in spite of his color.

"Now, Silas, don't forget to take off your hat and say, 'Good afternoon, sir,'" said Mrs. Baxter for the twentieth time since they started. "Yes'm," replied Silas slowly, wishing that she could think of something to talk about besides the taking off of hats.

They arrived in town just as the train steamed into the station. Mrs. Baxter stood upon the platform scanning every face as the passengers descended from the train. "At length," she exclaimed. "Oh, there he

is." Walking up to a tall, well-groomed man, "How do you do, Mr. Walker?"

"Well, well, Mrs. Baxter, I'm fine, thank you; how are you, and all of the family?" he asked as he shook her hand.

"Very well," replied Mrs. Baxter, smiling.

During this conversation Silas stood looking; he saw a fine example of a successful business man. His forty-odd years rested lightly upon his shoulders. His gray hair gave decidedly a touch of distinction to his appearance. He was an alert, progressive ranchman from a Western State. Silas admired this stately, refined looking man, and hoped with all his heart that he would not use the word "nigger." He stood with hat in hand waiting and wishing that he would speak to him. He felt slighted at not being noticed when Mrs. Baxter said, "Come, Mr. Walker, my car is over here," pointing to a beautiful car a short distance away.

Mr. Walker had not noticed that the boy was with them until they reached the car, and saw Silas struggling to lift his heavy baggage into the car. "Hello there, little fellow; are you with us?"

"Yes, sir," Silas answered, his hat still in his hand.

Seeing that the baggage was far too

heavy for his child strength, he said, "Don't, child, don't! Let me help you."

"I can get it in, sir, if you give me time." Silas was afraid of being called "good-for-nothing" before this great man.

"Yes, my child, I shall have to give you ten years, I'm afraid, you get hold of that end," pointing to the lighter side, "and I will take this end; now, both together."

Then Mr. Walker did what few colored boys of the South had seen a white man do. He took the little brown hands into his soft, white ones with their glittering diamonds, shook them and asked, "What is your name?"

"Silas Miller, sir."

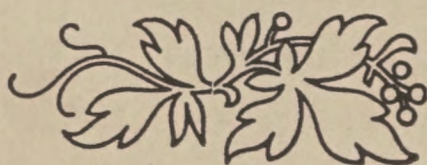
"Well, Silas, I am indeed glad to know you." The child did not know what to say, but he did the right thing—he smiled and bowed his head, then he put on his hat.

As they motored home, Silas wondered if Jesus was any nicer than this man. Mrs. Baxter also saw that Mr. Walker was different from the men of the South, but said nothing.

That night they sat down to a real Southern supper of fried chicken and waffles. As Silas served the supper, he could not help noticing Mr. Walker's cultured and refined

manner. Each time he whe served, he said "Thank you," or bowed his head. "Ain't he grand?" thought Silas, "I do hope he will stay two whole weeks."

Silas got up early the next morning and by ten o'clock had all of his work done. Mr. Baxter wondered what had come over the boy. "He worked well before, but now he is a wonder," he said to his wife.



THE AWAKENING

CHAPTER II.

The second day of Mr. Walker's stay he motored with Mr. Baxter to visit different farmers. Silas was overjoyed at being permitted to go with them. He enjoyed hearing the Westerner talk of his ranch, his cattle and the beautiful mansion he had built for his wife and Ethel, their only daughter. He did not let one word escape his ears.

The following Sunday was his day off, but he asked Mrs. Baxter if she wanted him to stay and help her with the dinner. She was delighted, but did not know what to make of Silas, as he was always so anxious to go home. The fact was, Silas wanted to get a chance to talk with Mr. Walker. How he hoped against hope that Mr. Walker would remain at the farm that day.

Sunday came, work done early, but poor Silas was very much disappointed. Mr.

Walker had been invited out after dinner, so Silas slept part of the afternoon and afterwards sat on one end of the front porch with his head resting in his hands, thinking what a big dunce he had been to have remained away from home. He did not know what a treat was in store for him. They had returned while he was sleeping. As the unexpected happens when we least expect it, so Silas was delighted when he saw Mr. Walker come out on the porch. "Well, Silas, why so quiet? I missed you so much this afternoon. I wished we could have taken you with us, but the car was filled, but you shall go with us tomorrow. Did you go home today?"

"No, sir, I stayed and helped Mrs. Baxter."

"That was fine."

Before Mr. Walker had time to say more, he was joined by Mr. Baxter and others. No one told Silas to go, so he remained where he was.

Years afterwards, Silas said it was the crowning day of his boyhood.

Yes," said Mr. Walker, after a long talk with the other men on business and how they got their various starts in life. "Yes," he said, and drew a long breath which was

almost a sigh—as if it hurt to recall past years: “There were so many weary years in my life, I would often wonder if it were better to die than to struggle so hard, but I stuck to it.”

Mr. Walker told how he had been left an orphan and at the age of eight, bound out to people who were so cruel to him; how he had worked ten long years without a dollar’s pay—only food and clothing. “If one can call one cheap suit, a pair of heavy boots and two suits of underwear to be worn the entire year, clothes,” he added. “In summer, I went barefooted and half naked.” Silas’ eyes were wide open. “Ten years! Good gracious, why, I would never get any clothes if I had to work ten years for them,” he thought.

“How well I remember,” continued Mr. Walker. “There was a big circus coming to town, and for weeks all the boys of the neighborhood had looked forward to this day. I had never been to a circus, or a picnic or anything, so I made up my mind to go, too. When I asked one of the boys what it would cost, and he said ‘fifty cents,’ my heart sank. I had never had fifty cents in my life. The boys, seeing such a distressful look on my face, asked what was the mat-

ter. I told them I had no money. They told me to ask Mr. Jones, the man with whom I lived, for it. I told them I was afraid. They called me a 'sissy' and other mean names. I waited until the day of the circus. During the morning I asked Mr. Jones if he would let me have fifty cents to go to the circus in the afternoon. If I had asked him for his heart he could not have thought it any worse. Fifty cents! Why, he thought I was insane. He knocked me down, then kicked me, and called me terrible names. I answered him back for the first time in my life, and there followed the hottest words I have ever spoken. I had always been quite an obedient boy, but that day I was almost besides myself. That disappointment was too great for me.

"I wanted to die, but instead, I went to bed and slept all the afternoon. I awoke, feeling better. I had decided that it was the last day I would ever work for him. As I ate supper that night, I said, 'This is the last meal I shall ever eat here.'

"Next day being Sunday, I got up early and got through with the milking. Then, instead of going to breakfast, I went upstairs and tied up what few things I had in a small bundle. Mr. Jones sat at the table

eating as I passed through the dining room. When he saw me, he asked, more tenderly than I had ever remembered hearing him speak. 'Well, Jack, I suppose you are moving today?'

"Yes, sir," I said, 'I have a human heart and feelings; I am no longer a boy; I start, today, to make my way in this world; I must live as well as you.' Mr. Jones thought for a moment, then said, 'What have you got to start with, young man?' (sneeringly). 'Two hands and will-power, sir.'

"Taking his wallet from his pocket, he drew forth ten dollars and pushed it towards me, saying, 'There is ten dollars, take it and buy a little common sense.' Taking the money, I flung it back to him, telling him that he needed it more than I did.

"Well, Mister, I wish you good luck with your two hands and will-power," chinned in Mrs. Jones. 'You better stay here while you are here, 'cause you ain't goin' to be runnin' back here after you once go; you don't know that you are eating your white bread.'

"I shall never trouble you, Mrs. Jones; I may come to see you, some time."

"Well, be sure that you don't need help when you come."

"I would rather starve than to ask help from you." With these words, I left the house a free boy.

"Until that day, I had almost been a helpless boy, but as I left that farm, I felt the responsibility of manhood. I walked about fifteen miles to a little town called Rocksville; there I met a farmer who was in need of a hand. He promised to give me ten dollars a month, which was considered good wages for a young fellow, at that time. I worked there for three years. During that time, I bought a little calf, and when it was old enough, Mr. Snithers sold it for me for five dollars. You can picture my joy. I really thought I was rich. I put the money with some I had saved and bought two more. Seeing my determination to get on, Mr. Snithers let me raise cows on shares—he taking a third of all that were raised.

"At the end of the third year I had saved two hundred and fifty dollars. I attended the district school during the winter months and had learned to read and write well. I took special interest in arithmetic, for I realized that this subject was most important to a business man. Having success in raising these cattle stimulated my determination to become a cattle rancher. With

this point in view, I left Mr. Snithers and went West, and there hired to one of the largest cattle raisers in the State of Wyoming. I lived there four years, learning the business. I had my ups and downs and would often say, 'At the end of this week I shall leave and learn something easier.' Then I would think of the years I had struggled. If I gave up, now, it would mean wasted time and possibly lost opportunity. So, I toiled on and on. I bought fifty acres of land and saved enough money to start business on a small scale.

"It was just four years and six months from the day I arrived in the West until I started in business for myself.

"Fortune seemed in my favor. With help and encouragement from the other ranchmen, I gained rapidly. I adopted the habit of not getting too deeply in debt; if so, I worked hard and paid it off as soon as possible. Soon, I became what they all called a shrewd business man. After two years—how well I remember—one day an old ranchman came to me and said, 'Walker, you are getting along fine, but you haven't started right.' I looked at him astonishedly, and asked what was wrong.

"Whole lot is wrong," with a smile.

"I did not understand, but stood looking at him, trying to fathom his meaning. 'Well, boy, you ain't got the jewel here.'"

"The jewel, the jewel?" I exclaimed.

"No, you ain't got no gal."

We both laughed heartily.

"Now," he said, slapping me on the back, "you look 'round here and get married to some good gal and you will be all right."

"I took his advice and a year later was married to one of the best girls of the West. I have given that advice to many other young men. Get married to the right girl while you are young---better than diamonds. Today I am a wealthy man, a happy husband and a proud father; but it was through Resentment to a long-standing injustice that I found my path to success."

All enjoyed hearing Mr. Walker's story---how he battled his way from a penniless country boy to position and wealth; but no one enjoyed it more than Silas Miller, who sat unseen and unheard. All that was said was food for his hungry soul.

Mr. Walker talked long into the evening of his investments and other interesting things. There was no egotism in his talk, only plain, every-day facts.

That night, when all were fast asleep,

Silas lay awake far into the night. He had heard the great Westerner talk and had determined to become a great man, too. But he did not know what to do. He thought of raising chickens, of horses and sheep; but, as hard as he thought, things did not seem to plan out right. Just as he had about given up thinking, he thought of hogs. "There," he said to himself, "I shall become a 'hog ranchman.' " With this thought uppermost in his childish mind, he fell asleep.

During that week, Silas racked his brain with plan after plan, but, small as they were, they were the foundation of his future work.

The next Sunday a proud and happy boy wended his footsteps homeward, a boy full of hope and ambition. It was pleasing to see how much he had learned from Mr. Walker in such a short time. When he entered the house that day he was a new Silas; the other children did not know what to make of him. Taking off his hat, he called, "Good morning, papa and mamma," and, after speaking to his sister and brothers, he asked how they all had been getting along. "I stayed at the farm my day off two weeks ago. It seems like a year since I last saw you all."

"Think you better stay there your Sunday off, next time, and learn more airs," said his mischievous sister, Nett.

Silas felt a little hurt at this unexpected remark. He had tried so hard to be nice and had hoped the others would see it.

Poor little fellow, he did not know that these children were not able to grasp his meaning so quickly.

It was rather amusing at dinner to the children, with Silas saying, "I thank you" and "Please pass this," or "May I have a glass of water." Yet, as funny as it seemed, they soon began to imitate him.

After dinner, Silas called his father and said, "Papa, I want to talk with you awhile."

"Well, son, what is it?"

"I want to start in business for myself, next year. I'm not going to work all my life for folks to be called a 'nigger,' and he laughed at."

At first Mr. Miller was inclined to laugh, but, seeing the child was so much in earnest, he said, "Well, Silas, what are you going to do?"

"I had thought that I —, or you and I would raise hogs, papa; don't you think we could?"

"Silas, I think that is a capital idea, but

I am going to let you depend on yourself; you can have that acre of ground at the end of the wheat field. Then I shall let you have all of your wages from now on. That is all I can do. You must manage your own business. I am only a hard-working man and know little or nothing of business."

Silas was pleased. He nearly hugged the life out of his father, and went back to work a happier boy.

There was still more happiness in store for him. As he was working Monday morning, Mr. Walker came out into the yard to watch him feed the chickens. "Good morning, Silas; you certainly are an industrious boy. You will make a splendid young man. What do you intend to do when you grow up?" he asked.

"I am going to raise hogs, sir, and I'm not going to wait until I grow up—I'm going to start now."

"Good, I say, boy, you have the right idea. When do you think you shall start?"

"Next month, sir."

Placing his hands upon Silas' shoulder, Mr. Walker said, "You have determined your course. Unless it proves wrong, let nothing turn you from it. Remember, my boy, great men whom the world honors to-

day, did not make their way in one single leap, but step by step. You may encounter many difficulties on the way, but with determination, you can overcome all things." Putting a ten dollar bill in his hand, he continued, "I give you this to help you to get a little start, but, remember, Silas, the ability to become a successful man will not depend upon what others give you, but upon the man within you. It will mean many hours of hard work and much sacrifice of pleasure, but stick to it. I am leaving here in a few days, but shall carry you in my mind always. I hope to have you as a visitor at my home, some day."

With this encouragement, Silas began his life's work.

CHAPTER III.

AT WORK IN EARNEST

The following weeks were great ones for Silas Miller. Mr. and Mrs. Baxter said he grew over night from a playful boy to a strong, thinking man. Mr. Walker had lighted the torch to Silas' ambition and it had burned briskly.

A month had passed since Mr. Walker's visit. One day Mr. Baxter was astonished when Silas walked up to him and asked him how much did he want for the six little pigs that he had in a separate pen with their mother.

"Well, Silas, I hadn't thought much about them; they are quite young, yet, to take away from their mother. Did some of the farmers ask you how much I wanted for them?"

"No, sir, I want to buy them."

"You want to buy them? Why, they are too young to kill for camp-meeting."

"I don't want them to eat (impatiently); I want to buy them to raise, myself."

"Hump," said Mr. Baxter; he did not know what else to say, he was so surprised.

"How much do you want for them?" continued Silas, anxiously.

Mr. Baxter rubbed his head and thought for a moment, then said, "Well, Silas, I will sell them to you for twenty dollars."

Poor Silas was surprised that they should cost so much, but he quickly survived the shock and asked, "How much do you want down?"

"Not less than half, Silas."

His face beamed with joy as he said, "All right, Mr. Baxter, I shall take them."

"When will you pay me the money?" asked Mr. Baxter, a little puzzled.

"I have it now, sir."

"Very well, then, you can make the payment today, if you wish."

Silas started to give Mr. Baxter the ten dollars, then he asked, "Mr. Baxter, shall we go to the house and sign papers?"

"Y-yes, Silas, that's the way to do business," he answered, looking at the boy out of the corner of his eye, and thinking what a bright little chap he was.

In the house, Mr. Baxter and Silas sat down to a table and made out the necessary papers. This incident brought the little

black boy and the white man nearer together than any other thing had.

From that day, though Silas was still a Negro boy, Mr. Baxter began to see him from a different view-point. He was ready to give him as much encouragement as had done the great Westerner, but in a different way, because it would take more than a few days to make this Southern-born man see that this child, created by the same God as he, had the same right to opportunities and privileges as the white man, yet, this was the beginning, and, already this step had brought forth great consideration.

He told Silas he could let the pigs remain in his field and that would save him the cost of buying food for them. Thinking for a while, Silas then asked how much he would charge for their board.

"Why, nothig at all, Silas."

"Will you write that on a piece of paper for me? Then I will be better satisfied."

"Why, Silas, can't you take my word?" said Mr. Baxter, a little hurt that Silas did not trust him as did most colored people.

"Yes, sir, I trust you, but nobody hears the bargain between us."

"I must say, Silas, you are starting right;

I shall do as you ask, then there will be no trouble."

When Silas went home the next day he had off, he could hardly wait, he was so anxious to tell of his purchase. He found his father walking around, looking over his truck patches. "Hello, there, Pa; bet you can't guess something?"

"No, not unless you are going crazy; I certainly thought something had happened the way you were racing against time or dust. I don't know which—when I first spied you." They both laughed.

"No, dad, I ain't crazy, I'm all filled up with joy. I bought six little pigs and their mother."

"You don't mean it, Si!"

"Yes, sir, and I have them half paid for, already."

"Well, you can have all you make to finish the payment. I won't bar the door of opportunity against you by taking your money, as long as I can possibly do without it. You just go right on, I am sure you will do the right thing. Si, you were your mother's heart; she was so fond of you. For her sake, I should like to see you prosper."

The children crowded around and looked with childish pride at their brother, Si, who

had learned so many "airs" and was going into the pig-raising business.

"Why, Si, you're getting to be just wonderful," said Nett, who was never lost for something to say."

"Thank you," he answered, without paying the least attention to her bantering remark. Seeing this, Nett abandoned her plot to tease.

Months passed quickly by. Silas worked hard during the day and studied at night. He had made it a rule to study each night before going to bed. (Mrs. Baxter permitted him to have a light in his room with the promise that he would be very careful with it.) He was astonished to see how swiftly he improved by this method.

One of the things that pleased Mr. Baxter was, as anxious as Silas was about his own business, he never neglected to do his duty towards his employer. In this Mr. Baxter encouraged him very much by saying, "You will certainly be a successful business man, you put both self and love into your daily work; no man can fail who does this." These words were worth hundreds of dollars to this boy.

At the end of six months, Silas paid the last dollar that he owed Mr. Baxter and be-

came the owner of the pigs. Can you, dear reader, imagine the joy that swept through the heart of this young boy when Mr. Baxter said, "Silas Miller, you deserve to be the owner of a hundred pigs, so faithfully have you worked, and in less than six months you are entirely out of debt? That is right, keep as far from debt as you possibly can."

"Yes, sir, that is what Mr. Walker said he did," answered Silas.

"Did Mr. Walker tell you that?"

"No, sir, not exactly, but he said it was the best way."

This was the first time that Mr. Baxter noticed that Silas was drafting a pattern. "Whoever follows in the footsteps of Mr. Walker will become a conscientious, successful man, I can say that much."

"Silas, I am afraid that we Southerners have been made to look upon your race as though it was just to exist, but Mr. Walker sees it differently. It will take many years for the people of the South to come to this knowledge, but, nevertheless, we shall gradually awaken to it." Silas bowed his head as he usually did when he did not know just what was right to answer.

A few days later Silas drove his litter of

pigs home. "Look, Papa," he cried as he came into the yard, "ain't they grand?" Before his father could get to the door, Nett exclaimed, "Good gracious, Pa, it's Si with his gang of pigs." "You hush, Miss Nett, or I shall box your ears," said Mr. Miller.

The little pigs started to squeal very loud as they came into the strange yard; they were tired and hungry.

Nett, with her little hands on her hips and her large, brown eyes rolled upwards, said in a very exciting manner, "I know them pigs squealing shall get on my nerves and there shall be no living around here with me."

"For goodness sake, Nett, who cares for your nerves?" said John, a younger brother. "You can stay anywhere that suits them."

Their father, hearing this conversation, commanded them to hush. They all quickly obeyed.

While Nett was mischievous, she was also very kindhearted and industrious, and was the first to offer her assistance to care for the pigs. She started to work in the early morning, as Silas had left them in her care, his father being too busy and away from home most of the time.

After feeding them their dinner, she got a piece of an old box top, sat on the ground,

and printed in large letters: STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN. A WHOLE LOT OF PIGS FOR SALE—HIGH BRED, ALL KINDS AND KOLORS. CALL AT OUNCE. PLEASE PAY CASH.

She was nearly frightened to death when a farmer drove up to the house. He called several times before Mrs. Miller heard him. She went out to see what he wanted and was nearly shocked out of her wits when he asked to see the pigs they had for sale. He also asked how much they wanted for them and of what stock they were.

Mrs. Miller stood with her mouth partly open, hardly knowing what to say. "Who'se got any pigs for sale?"

"Why I thought you had; I saw a large sign in the back lot near the main road, reading: 'Pigs for sale.'"

"I don't know anything at all about it; our Si bought a sow and its litter some time ago, but I understand he had calculated on raising them." The stranger had hardly finished talking when another farmer stopped to ask the same question. Nett had seen and heard the men and had taken refuge behind the barn, so no one could tell where she was, neither did anyone know who put the sign up in the back lot. "Well, I am going down

to see what kind of a sign that is. If Si was going to sell the pigs I think it was as much as he could say the same and not have me standing here like a fool with a hundred farmers a riding here asking me about pigs and what stock they are, as if I knew the pedigree of pigs," said Mrs. Miller, perplexed.

Mrs. Miller started for the lot, but Nett had stolen from her hiding place and removed the sign, so, when she got there, no sign was in sight. She stood and looked as far as her eyes could see, then said, "They certainly must be seeing things, there ain't no signs here, and the next old dunce that stops here and asks me about pigs for sale, I'm going to give him a piece of my mind." But no more called.

Nett felt rather shaky about her mischievous prank and stayed away all of the afternoon, fearing a scolding from her step-mother. She did not go to the house, but towards evening, went to meet her father and told him what she had done to help Si sell his pigs. "Why, Nett," he said, "I don't know as Si wants to sell his pigs yet; not until spring, if he sells them at all."

"I put up a sign and when some men stopped and asked about them, I took it down.

I thought I had better wait until you came."

"I am glad you did; Si will tell us what he wants us to do, then we will help him as best we can." Nett was overjoyed when her father did not scold her.

Mrs. Miller told her husband of the strange calls during the day and he explained to her what Nett had told him.

The next month being December, it is an old custom in the South for hired men to work from the first of March to the twenty-fourth of December; this day, they all leave firesides with their families until spring again. After the holidays, Silas began to plan for the coming year. He did not care to work for Mr. Baxter again unless he consented to give him more money. This, Mr. Baxter did not see as being necessary and Mrs. Baxter added that his kind had worked for her father for nothing. "Yes'm, but that was fifty years ago. Do you think that my people could live in a progressive country, in a progressive age, and not grasp the progressive spirit?" asked Silas, in a reproachful manner.

"Yes, Silas, you quote that which is true, with that spirit you will get on even if you do not work for us."

They both really liked Silas and hated to

see him leave them, but could not think of paying him more money.

It was New Year's Day. Silas sat reading the "Ad" column in a Philadelphia newspaper; at last he came to this ad: "Boy wanted to help on farm; must have previous knowledge of farm work and care of hogs; Southern colored boy preferred. Reference required." Reading it over to his father, he asked his opinion. Mr. Miller said little, but told him to go over to Mr. Price, his teacher, and ask him to help him to answer it. The letter was written and mailed. Each day Silas looked anxiously for the rural mail carrier. It was nearly two weeks before the long-looked-for letter came. The man not only answered the letter, but stated that he would refund his fare as soon as he arrived; that he did not want him until spring, and if this was satisfactory to him, he would not look for anyone else. He was willing to give the wages Silas asked for and said that if he proved to be a good hand, he would raise him after two months, five dollars more.

When Silas read this letter he was elated. In plainer words, he was wild with joy.

"Isn't this great, Papa?"

"Yes, Si, it is fine," said Mr. Miller slowly,

"but I kinder hate to see you go so far away from us."

"But, Papa, it will only be for a little while, you know how anxious I am to get started and it will take me so long with the small wages I get here."

"But, son," his strong voice quavering, "I'm afraid when you once get away, and get a glimpse of city life, and Northern freedom, you will forget both us and your business."

"No, Papa, I want you to trust me and pray that God will direct me. Papa, you know they say you can get a broader knowledge of life and business in the North where you come in closer touch with both races. It will help me so much and prepare me to battle with the problems of the business world."

His father thought a while, then said: "I guess you are right. Si, as I said at first I would not put stumbling blocks in your pathway; I shall keep my promise; you may go. What are you going to do this winter?"

"I'm going to school; I must know a lot to be a good business man."

"Very well, that's a good plan."

School opened on the second of January. Two weeks later Silas started. Nett and

little John had started, and they were proud that Silas was going, too. That morning, while all were preparing for school, Nett asked Silas who was going to care for the pigs while he was away.

"I was going to ask you, Nett. I know you will do your best. Of course Papa will help you."

Nett opened her eyes wide and trying to look astonished, asked, "Who, me?"

"Yes, Nett, you. No one would take care of them better than you."

Nett was really pleased to know that her brother would trust her with his pigs, and Silas knew this. "Well, if I must, I shall," she said, tossing her head on the side, and scampering away to the mirror to see if she had grown taller over night.

"For the love of Mike, come on, we shall have to start to raise *looking glasses*, if Nett continues to plaster herself up before that one all of the time. No one can get a chance to see, for her," said little John.

"Good night, Moses; we shall soon have an orator in the family if John keeps on making such fine speeches."

"Children, stop quarreling and get off to school at once or you'll be late!" said their mother.

News had spread quickly concerning Silas' plans. When he walked into the school room, that morning, a number of boys were standing around the stove. As soon as they saw him, some started to squeal as loud as they could—imitating hogs. Others grunted and still others got down and walked around on their hands and feet.

Earl Green asked how many pigs could he buy, as he wanted two dozen at once. Silas felt hurt at these sneers and remarks. He was nearly in tears when Nett came to his rescue, saying, "Don't let the boys tease you, Si, they will be sniggling and working for other men when you will be your own boss."

At this remark, many hushed, others laughed louder. It did not matter much now to Si—Nett was in sympathy with him, and he cared little what others thought or said.

When Mr. Price came in a few minutes later, he went forward and shook Silas' hand, saying, "I am glad to see you here. You know you are nearly through the eighth grade, and I am sure you can finish in two months if you try hard. I am also glad to learn of your success in securing the position you wrote for. We shall be sorry to lose

you, but glad to know that you are making such a good start."

Silas was much beloved by his schoolmates, but they were a little jealous of his determination to become a business man.

Let us stop here a moment and say for the sake of some boys and girls, that envy and hatred are two enemies that rots the very souls of men. They who hate their comrades because they possess the ability to become more successful than themselves, have within them souls that have no magnetic personality. They are hopeless and make shiftless men and women. They are the ones that fill the courts, the jails, the reform schools, the homes for the incorrigibles. But if they possess lifting qualities and help others, they are also lifted. It is also true with many as they succeed in life: they makes enemies instead of gaining friends.

The two months in school passed quickly for Silas. He studied hard, but at play, he was foremost in all sports. On the twenty-eighth of February, he said good-bye to his schoolmates and took farewell leave of the rural district school where he had spent most of the joys and sorrows of his childhood. These he was leaving behind him to take his

place in the wide world; to share, as had others, the struggles and disappointments to win fame, honors or successes or whatever Fate had in store for him.

The following evening, Mr. Price asked Silas to come to his home. Never was he more surprised when he walked into that house that night; all of his schoolmates greeted him; it was a surprise party.

Seated around a beautiful table, twenty-eight boys listened to their teacher. Mr. Price took for his subject "Unselfish Encouragement." He talked until their young, undeveloped minds seemed at length to grasp his meaning. At the conclusion each boy stood with his left foot upon his chair, and with lighted candles in their right hands, held high above their heads, and pledged in thunderous voices these words: "Silas Miller, we, your comrades and schoolmates, light your pathway through the darkest hours and wish you all the success that mortal man can obtain in this world. Our hearts and hopes are all with thee."

"It is just one of the things I want you to always remember, Silas," said Mr. Price.

The sneers and curt remarks of the boys were all forgiven and forgotten; there was not a boy who was not sorry to see him go.

The memory of that party, the handshakes and good-byes, Silas Miller carried with him to his grave.

Silas' leaving home was the gossip for general discussion in the community.

Aunt Mollie Noble, widely known as the "newscarrier," and who never forgot to voice her opinion of the same, called on Sister Maria Dudley, Sunday, after church.

"Good marnin, Sis Maria, how is yo' to-day?"

"Only tol'able, Aunt Mollie, come in!"

Aunt Molly stepped in almost out of breath. Sitting down on the first chair she came to, she said: "Ah jest came ovah for a little while after church, I thought I would stay 'ntil Sunday schule stahts."

"Sho, Honey, glad to hab yo', take off yor t'ings. Did yo' hab a gran' sermon dis mornin'?"

"Yes'm, very good, but everybody is dat 'cited 'bout de Millers dat no one scare know-ed what de preacher said attall."

"Is dat so?"

"Yes'm, yo' know Silas Miller leaves fo' de No'th, Monday?"

"Yes'm, Aunt Mollie, I hyeahs dat, too!"

"Now, Sis Mariah, doan yo' t'ink John Miller is plum crazy to let dat lit'l upstart

of a boy go gaddin' aroun' to de Lord knows whar by hissef?"

"Well, Aunt Mollie, I doan hardly know what to say 'bout Brother Miller."

"Ah sez dat he is crazier dan a musrat," said Aunt Mollie, holding her hands and shaking her head.

"Yo' know dem Millers allus had high-fluten notions. I wuz talkin' to Brother Miller mahse'f de udder day."

"What did he say, Sis Mariah?" Aunt Mollie asked, rolling her chair closer so as to catch every word.

"Well, he's tickled to death. Yo' should of heard him talk of his son. Says I to him, 'Ain't yo' kind'r skeered to 'low dat boy go so far away from yo'?' He jes' says, 'I can trust mah boy to do de right thing!'"

"Now, what do yo' t'ink ob dat fo' a civilized father?" said Aunt Mollie, rolling her beady eyes in disgust. An' he said also dat it would be an edicatin' fo' him."

"Ah doan know what dis world am comin' to, Sis Mariah. Ah wish yo' could heb seen Si dis marnin, a buttin' an' a scrapin' an' a bowin' wors'n any peacock dat yo' eber seen. Now, when we wuz young, our parents told us what to do an' we did it; but to-day, yo' jest born de chillens into de world an' wen

dey is knee-high to a grasshopper, dey finish raisin' demself an stahts to bossin' dey ma an' pa."

"Yo' sho don sed it all now, Aunt Mollie," said Sis Maria, "but yo' can't 'spect any mo' from dem Miller chillens, 'cause Silas' mother wus a queer critter herse'f. She had all dese hyeah noti'ns 'bout edicatin' an sich t'ings. Dey say she kep piles ob books, an' read an' studied all de time. Now, a' tells yo' de truth. Ah ain't got no faith in dis hyeah sendin' yo' chillens some whar way up No'th to get an edicatin', 'cause dar wuz Sister Gibbs; she sint her boy to college in Noo Yak while she worked herse'f simple an' went ha'f naked an' haf starved. Says I to her one day, 'When is yo' boy goin to get gradiated from college?' She says, 'It's two mo' years he's got, yet, den mah boy will be a doctah; ah sartinly will be a proud mother!' Well, de nex' t'ing ah knows, her son done comes home. He had married some ole widder wif fo' yung'uns an' she ole 'nuf to be his ma!"

"Yo' don't say so, Aunt Mollie! Po' t'ing. I guess she was terrible hurt."

"Ah doan know how much hurt she war, but ah knows she drapped dead de nex' day. She aworkin' hersef to death to edicate her

son to kech an ole widder an' fo' yung'ns wuz too much fo' her. No, I doan believe in sendin' dem away. Ah said to one ob de sisters to-day, 'Dars Miller asendin' his son away to some strange man dat he knows nothin' bout; he is lak'ly to be one ob dese student doctahs dat dey say am po'ful plentiful in de cities dis time ob de year. Ah'd feel maghty sorry fo' de boy ef one did kech him, but it would teach his pa some sense.'

By this time the bell had rung for Sunday school. Aunt Mollie bade Sister Maria good-bye and left.

CHAPTER IV.

LEAVING HOME

As anxious as Silas had been to go, when the time came he felt downhearted and almost wished he had not planned to go. Then he made up his mind to let nothing stand in his way. Nett had gotten up early that morning and packed Silas' few clothes in a little basket; she put in a few biscuits that her step-mother had baked the day before. Wishing to give him something for remembrance, she put in her little gold locket that she had worn from babyhood, and a New Testament that had belonged to her mother.

The day before Silas had sent Nett over to Mr. Baxter to get his reference from him. Curiosity overtook her when he handed her the envelope unsealed. After walking a little way, she stopped and opened it. She read:

"To Whom It May Concern: Silas Miller has worked for me nearly two years.

I have always found him a good, honest boy, a willing worker, a little slow but his work always well done. He will grow to be a good trusty farm hand and servant."

"Humph," said Nett, as she searched in her pocket for a pencil and a piece of paper, which she quickly found. Sitting down by the roadside, she wrote: "And maybe it may concern you to know, too, that Silas Miller don't intend to be a 'trusty servant' always, but a real business man. He has started already, so please don't think he is good for nothing but a servant. Please be kind to him for his sister's sake.—Nett."

She re-read this note with great pride and placed it in the envelope and sealed it.

That morning, while packing his things, she placed the envelope in the Testament with her little gift.

The hour came, his father drove to the door in the family surrey. Silas kissed them all good-bye. Nett went to the station with them. On the way Nett told Silas she was going to take good care of the pigs and would write him each week and tell him all the news. She talked and talked, and at last she grew so silent that Silas asked her what she was thinking about.

"I was thinking that when you get start-

ed, would you help me to do something?"

"Certainly, Nett, what is it?"

"Oh, I sha'n't tell you now."

"All right, whatever it is I am sure it is right and I shall help you all I can."

At this answer, Nett hugged him and told him he was a dear brother.

As the train steamed out of Chestertown, Silas waved good-bye to his father and Nett. It was his first trip on a train and he enjoyed it immensely. It seemed as if he would never reach Philadelphia. He made friends with an elderly gentleman that sat near him. When the conductor called Philadelphia, Silas began to feel a little nervous, but the stranger assured him that he would stay with him until he found the party he was looking for.

"Are you sure the man will meet you and do you know him?"

"Yes, sir, he said he would meet me and would be standing at the gate."

"Very well, then, we'll wait until we reach the gate," said the stranger.

It was a wonderful sight to Silas to see the many trains in this large shed, and hundreds of persons hurrying to and fro on all sides. They walked slowly behind the great crowds that were leaving the trains.

Just as they reached the gate, a tall, swarthy-looking white man came forward. Lifting his hat, he asked: "Is this the young colored man that I am looking for? Silas Miller is the name, I believe. I am Mr. Dayton."

"Yes, sir, this is Silas Miller." Turning to the stranger, Silas thanked him for his kindness. In return the man gave Silas his name and address, inviting him to call to see him when visiting Philadelphia. To Silas the Broad Street Station was the most wonderful place he had ever seen.

Mr. Dayton left him in the waiting room while he went to attend to some business. That gave Silas a chance to see much of the station, with its beautiful waiting room, its lunch rooms, the calling of the different trains and the steady stream of human beings going and coming ceaselessly, was a great sight to this child who had only seen the little station and the three-coach trains of his home town.

Mr. Dayton returned in a short time. "Well, Silas, we shall start for home. I suppose you are tired and hungry, but the madam will have dinner ready for us and I am sure we can do justice to it when we get there."

Mr. Dayton lived on a large farm in Bucks County, about twenty miles from the city, and as they drove along the country roads Silas had a chance to get a good look at his future employer. He saw at once that he was kindhearted and pleasant. As they turned into a lane leading to a small farmhouse, not far from the main road, Mr. Dayton said: "Here we are, this is our home." At this he gave a long, loud whistle, and in answer to it, a pleasant looking woman came to the door. "Here's our boy, and that's my wife, Silas, Mrs. Dayton, a finer woman never lived."

Mrs. Dayton shook hands with Silas and told him she would show him to his room and then they would have dinner.

Was it possible that this was his room with its white bed and clean, white linen, a bureau, a little stand and two chairs, matting on the floor and dainty white curtains at the windows?—everything was immaculate. Silas stood in the middle of the room. "I wonder if this is really my room?" he thought. To be sure he called Mrs. Dayton and asked did she mean this was his room.

"Yes, Silas, is it all right?"

"Yes'm, it's fine, only I thought I had got-

ten into the wrong room."

"Hurry down, we shall have dinner at once, because I know you must be hungry."

Silas clasped his hands with joy; his first thought was, "I wish Nett could see this." He loved his mischievous little sister; she had been his chum and partner in everything since they were children.

That night Mr. Dayton read Silas' references from Mr. Baxter. When he read the other note, he was amused, but said nothing to Silas about it.

Mr. and Mrs. Dayton became very fond of Silas. They found what Mr. Baxter said was very true. He was an industrious boy and a slave to duty.

He ate with them and in the evening sat with them in the drawing room and read their papers and books. Mrs. Dayton did everything to make him feel at home. All of this, which he was so unused to in the South did not turn Silas. He showed his appreciation of their kindness, but was very quiet and seldom spoke unless he was spoken to.

When company came, he went to his room (which was a haven to him) without being told or hinted at. In everything he showed good home training or self-culture.

For this the Daytons admired him. He worked well, learning the business quickly and doing his work so well that after six months Mr. Dayton made him foreman.

One day after working hard in helping Mr. Dayton with his hogs, preparing them for sale, Mr. Dayton said to a friend: "I have never seen such a boy. I would never have gotten through to-day had he not taken such interest and given good suggestions here and there which helped me so much."

That night Mr. Dayton recalled the contents of the little note written on the slip of paper enclosed with Silas' reference. He asked his wife if she had kept it as he wanted it. Mrs. Dayton got it for him; he read it again and again. 'Turning to his wife, he said, "Whoever Nett is, she is right. Silas will never be contented to work as a mere laborer for others. His wits are as sharp as steel."

"Yes, I noticed the first day he was here that he was brilliant and intelligent."

When Silas came in from work that evening, Mr. Dayton asked him about his family at home, if he had any brothers or sisters.

"Yes, sir, I have two brothers and one sister."

"What is your sister's name?"

"Nett," Silas replied.

That night when Silas was fast asleep Mr. Dayton wrote a letter to Nett. "Dear little Nett," it read, "I got the note you sent me. I am glad to say that all that you said is true. Silas is a good boy and takes great interest in his work. We are very fond of him, yes, a boy so tactful as he will never be contented to labor for others. I admire his ability to strive to become a man of worth. We shall hate to lose such a boy, but he is not ours to keep long. I will add, we shall be kind to him for his own sake, and yours. Very truly yours, Mr. Dayton."

When little Nett got that letter, there wasn't a happier girl alive. After reading it she took down an old picture that hung in her bedroom, and placed the letter in the back of it. There it hung for many years with its secret.

CHAPTER V.

SEEING CITY LIFE

Silas was very happy but lonely. He met two boys who worked on adjoining farms. They both had been reared in the city, but their parents had come from the South years ago. When work was dull in the city they would come and work on the farm for a little while. They met Silas and became friendly at once. He was glad to have a little company, for at times he grew very homesick. Horace Turner's and Bob Dale's parents had worked hard to give them a good education, but after finishing grammar school, they refused to go further or to take up any good trade. Like a ship without a rudder, tossed and driven without a sure destination, so were Horace and Bob. They had chosen the road of sports, doing easy work and when they could not obtain this kind, they did a little hard work to keep pocket change. When they met Silas, they called him a "Green-horn," from down in the sticks. "We'll take him around and teach him to spend his change," said Bob.

"I don't know about that; he doesn't look so soft," slowly replied Horace.

After being acquainted for some time, they asked Silas to go into the city. Silas was anxious to go but consulted Mr. Dayton first. "Silas, I hardly know what to say. You never know who strangers are, but if you think you are strong enough by all means go." Silas did not understand just what he meant by "being strong enough," yet he did not ask and Mr. Dayton did not say.

A few weeks later, Silas went to stay over Sunday with the boys. He was introduced to their parents and their sisters. Both families lived together in one large house. Bob's sister played the piano and Horace's sister sang like a nightingale.

Silas had heard good voices, but not trained ones. He sat almost afraid to move out of the corner. Both girls saw how timid he was and took great delight to show their ability or rather "show off."

Later in the evening, the boys took him out to meet some of their friends and see their city. From the first Silas felt far beneath them. They were well dressed and seemed to know so much. As he looked down at his clothes, cheap and shabby, but

clean, he felt out of place. He thought of what Nett would say, "Snap in, old boy." With this thought he soon forgot himself.

Several of the boys laughed when they introduced Silas. "Just from down the sticks, ain't he?" whispered some of the boys. Silas heard this remark and answered, "yes, just from down the sticks, and met these two fine, young gentlemen working on farms near me, doing the same kind of work that I am, as for the same purpose I do not know. One thing I do know, if they have the same viewpoint as I, we shall be lifetime friends."

Bob and Horace would like to have choked Silas. They would not for worlds have had their friends know that they were working on the farm. Bob was very angry, but Horace was much amused and said nothing.

"Boys, this will never do, standing here, where shall we go for sport?" "Let's go down and stand on the corner of 'A' street and watch the girls," said one. "Let's go over to the pool room and pull a little change first," said another. "What will our friend, Mr. Miller, suggest?" asked another. "I don't know," said Silas, shaking his head, "this is my first visit to the city and I know nothing of the places of amusement here."

"You just follow us, and we will initiate you to real city life." On the way to the pool room they passed a crowd of boys shooting crap on the corner. Crap games, cards and drinking Silas was prepared against; he had seen these things in the country and his humble Christian mother and father had taught him the wrongs of such things. Silas Miller did not know how many other sins—deep, dark, black, blacker sins—existed in this world. On entering the pool room, they played a while and then asked Silas to join them.

"Is it gambling?" he asked.

"No, you blockhead, it is good sport and easy money."

"You all go ahead and play, I will look on this time until I get more acquainted with the game."

Seeing that they could not get him to spend his money here, they decided to take in a movie show, asking Silas to treat them by paying their fares, which he willingly did.

"We will make him spend his change yet if we keep at it long enough," they whispered.

Silas enjoyed the show very much. It was the first one of its kind he had ever

seen. After leaving the theatre, Silas said, "Suppose we go home; you know I'm not used to staying up so late. I guess you'll think me rather 'sissy,' but I must get accustomed to the city before becoming one of you."

They had already begun to see that Silas had a depth of mind that one could not readily fathom. However well prepared, you could not guess just what he would say or do next. The slightest whisper reached his keen ears; he seemed to read one's thoughts and answered accordingly. Being a close observer he could detect the slightest wink or hint. This made the boys very careful. As bad and mischievous as they were, they did not care to have Silas catch them at their tricks. They had intended to stay out later and take in a cabaret, but when Silas suggested going home, they thought it best not to say anything if they ever expected him to go out with them again.

Sunday being a rest day, city folks, tired and weary from the week's toil, take advantage of this day to sleep a little late, getting up just in time to rush off to church services that begin about 11 o'clock, but Silas being used to rising with the sun, could

not sleep later than six o'clock; so he decided to dress and take a walk. It was a beautiful April morning and Easter Sunday. The sun was shining brightly and warm; the trees were putting forth their beautiful green leaves, along the street here and there little patches of green grass, showing that Nature was spreading her green mantle. The birds sang and chirped as if they were glad that the long winter was passed and spring had come, and they seemed to be pouring forth their thanks to God. Silas walked and walked. He saw great throngs of people going to and from large churches, while bells rang and chimes pealed out some of the hymns that he had heard so often. His heart was full and his eyes filled with tears, when he thought of the folks at home and of the little chapel where he had learned to recite his first Easter recitation.

On his return he told them of his walk. "I am a great lover of Nature, and seem to get wonderful inspiration in the early morning."

As they sat down to breakfast that morning, both families saw that Silas was far more cultured than their children, whom they idolized. His manner in eating and

speaking commanded great admiration and respect from them. Even Eva Dale who had in her mind to show off to the country lad, soon found herself of little importance. Silas Miller held the winning cards and he played them.

After breakfast they all prepared for church. It being Easter Sunday they were all dressed in their new spring suits. They asked Silas to go but hoped he would not accept their invitation as they did not care to take him, so poorly dressed, to their fine church among their fashionable set.

Instinct seemed to have forewarned him and he answered that he would rather stay and sit on the front steps and watch the people as they passed; then he added: "I have nothing nice to wear." They were very pleased and of course did not urge him to go. Mrs. Turner gave him a book and told him to read it if he became lonely. "We shall not be gone more than two hours," she said.

He had just started to read when Margaret Kempt, a young girl living two doors away, came out all dressed for church. She recognized him as being the boy who was visiting the Turner's home. She was so surprised to see him sitting there alone, she

exclaimed, "Oh, aren't you going to church with the folks?"

"No, I'm going to sit and read until they come home."

"But goodness, this is Easter and you should go today, by all means."

Seeing that Margaret was a friendly little girl, he said, "I did not have anything to wear, so I decided not to go. I hear that your churches are so fine and the people so fashionably dressed here."

"Oh, don't stay away for that cause; come and go with me. Mother is not feeling so well and father is going to stay with her, so I am going alone. Besides, we belong to the Episcopal Church and we go there to worship and not for fashion."

Silas felt the warmth of this friendly invitation and decided to go.

As they entered the church it was a beautiful sight. The great pipe organ with its thundering music; the choir dressed in their peculiar-looking gowns—how they sang, "Christ is risen!"

The minister in his long robe read from St. John 3:16: "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The service was

quiet and simple, but very impressive; it seemed to touch the hearts of the entire congregation. Silas said he would always remember that wonderful sermon.

Returning from church, they met Horace and Bob; each walking with a beautiful girl. The boys were nearly shocked out of their wits with surprise when they saw Silas with Margaret Kempt.

Margaret Kempt was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Kempt. Her father was the most prominent and prosperous colored lawyer of the city. They had reared their child not to be selfish or conceited. She was much loved by all who knew her, and at the early age of fifteen could be trusted to make good friends. Her parents would always say, "whenever you make acquaintances, Margaret, invite them to your home; we are older and experienced, and can help you to judge in selecting friends." In this way little Margaret and her parents grew to be great chums instead of becoming estranged as most children are with their parents at this age.

Silas told Margaret of his determination; why he had left the country and how he had intended to return as soon as he had made money enough to start in business on

a larger scale. Margaret, in return, told him she was taking a business course with the view of becoming her father's secretary. "My father is doing good business, now, and I shall be glad when I am proficient enough to be in the office with him."

When they reached the house Margaret asked Silas to call that evening to meet her parents, as they were glad to meet young men who are trying to make good in the world."

When he went into the house the boys laughed and asked him if he was not reaching high up to be walking and talking so friendly with Miss Kempt.

"You know she's the daughter of one of wealthiest lawyers of the city."

"Yes, she told me her father was a lawyer; she also invited me in this evening to meet her parents before leaving for the farm."

"Is that so?" said Mrs. Turner, who had made many unsuccessful attempts to get her children on better social terms with Margaret Kempt.

"Aren't you afraid you'll get kicked out of the house?" said Eva Turner, with a sneer.

"No, Miss Turner, not unless I give him

good cause for such an offense."

Finding it useless to argue with Silas, she stopped at his last remark.

During the afternoon company came. Silas enjoyed the playing and singing, but sat quietly; he was not one to push himself upon others unasked. About five o'clock Margaret rang the bell and asked if Silas Miller could come in for a few minutes. "I want father and mother to meet him." Excusing himself, Silas went with Margaret and was introduced to her parents.

When Silas left the room Mrs. Turner said she did not know what Attorney Kempt was thinking of to let his daughter pick up any boy or girl that she chanced to find on the street and ask them into their home as friends: "Now she sees this boy and had the nerve to drag him off to church with her, and ask him in to spend the evening."

"And he hadn't any more sense than to go, looking like an Arab," said Eva.

"If you had said he had sense enough to go, I think you'd made better time," said Eva's father.

"Papa, who asked your opinion on the subject?"

"No one. I usually give my opinion free of asking," he said, laughing good natured-

ly. "I suppose the old lawyer knows what he is doing. If you and Horace possessed a little of the culture that young Miller has, I am sure you would be better liked."

"Oh, Will, you are always contrasting your children with someone else, and I hate that; they are as good as he. I suppose Margaret pitied him sitting there so forlorn and shabby-looking. He should have had gumption enough to have stayed on the farm until he got better clothes to come visiting decent people," said Mrs. Turner, suppressing something akin to rage.

"That's the trouble with you all now; you think that clothes is the whole thing; but let me tell you, it goes far from making the man or woman. Most of our people carry more on their backs than in their heads. Of course, I must admit that clothes help, but it is far from being the whole thing."

"Papa always has to give a long sermon on every little thing that is said."

"Yes, daughter, I hope some day you will understand what papa means."

"If you mean that I must pick up all kinds of persons for friends, I shall never understand you, papa."

"I suppose that's the way old Kempt made his money; by associating with such ignor-

ant people so that they would come to him with all their trouble," said Mrs. Turner.

"Mother, you should not say such things, Attorney Kempt is considered the shrewdest lawyer that we have, and it is said that he touches nothing that is chicane, and they all take their hats off to him. He is sociable because he was once a poor boy himself and worked his way up to his present standing, and Henry Kempt is not one to forget so soon," corrected Mr. Turner.

Mrs. Turner, finding no other subterfuge, said, "I hope they'll have a pleasant evening."

Never before had Silas met such learned people of his own race. They made him feel, not as a stranger but as a friend in their magnificent home. Margaret had told them of Silas' mission in the North. They both encouraged him very much and offered to assist him in any matter where their advise would be of service.

When Silas left, he thanked Mr. and Mrs. Turner for their hospitality, and also the boys for inviting him in to see the city. The most memorable object of that visit was Margaret Kempt. Who could not admire her sweet congenial manner and air, so different from the other girls whose sole ob-

ject was to attract attention?

Monday night, Silas wrote a long letter to Nett, telling her of his visit to the city and everything that he thought would interest her. But Nett noticed that Margaret Kempt seemed to be the chief object of interest.

The boys kept friends with Silas and were more friendly than ever when they found that he was making good with the daughter of one of their neighbors. Finding that they could not persuade him to spend much money, they tried to coax him to join their set. They invited him to the city often; Silas going when it was his time off.

One who goes through life without falling, is weaker than he who falls; but is made stronger by the fall.

Silas had worked four months. He had spent but little money, but decided to buy a new suit of clothes when he came in town that evening. The boys, knowing that he had money with him, tempted him to play pool. They told him it was an easy way to make money to start in business sooner and that it was not gambling or the city would not permit it in public places.

This seemed possible to Silas. He had

brought ten dollars with him, so decided to play once. He could not understand, but soon found that he had lost five dollars, and when they let him stop, he had only three dollars left. It was a bitter lesson to this boy, but a good one.

When Margaret asked him was he going to church the next morning, he shook his head sadly and said, "No, Margaret, but I do want to speak to your father; I have something to ask him."

Margaret was delighted to call him. Attorney Kempt came into the drawing room to find Silas so haggard and forlorn-looking.

"Why, Silas, old fellow, what's the matter? You look ready to drop," he said, laughing as he reached Silas his hand.

Silas stood up and tried to smile, but he could not. So he simply said, "Mr. Kempt, I came to ask you, is playing pool gambling?"

"Yes, Silas, it is, in a way; although many claim that it is not."

"The boys asked me to play with them, last night; they said it was not gambling, but I lost seven dollars."

Mr. Kempt stood thinking for a moment, then he said slowly, "Silas, I am glad you lost, but sorry it was so much. No one

could ever have convinced you that it is wrong as much as you are convinced now. Seven dollars could have done much to help you, but it has helped you to become strong against the many temptations of the city."

Silas hung his head. Walking over to him, Mr. Kempt placed his hand on his shoulder and said, "Do not be ashamed, Silas, you came to me for advice—one to whom you could tell the truth. I was once a boy, too, and I can sympathize with you.

"Dear boy, playing pool or any other such games are dangerous to the average youth, and particularly to the boy who must depend upon himself and hard work to obtain money for higher purposes. Because, after becoming an expert, and if circumstances ever cross his path, he will—if not masterful-minded (and nine cases out of ten he is not—be tempted to use this means to obtain money; and, being experienced, he will easily victimize the inexperienced player. Thus, both he and others will slowly but surely be drawn down to a gambler's hell.

"I want to impress upon you now, that there is no easy way to make money. No easy way to true success. This comes only to the man who is willing to work and work

hard. Let your dollars be honestly earned, and when your work is done, you can retire with a clear conscience to yourself and your fellowman.

"Miller, I have been at the bar for nearly twenty years. I have, through hard work, won honor and fame. There is not a living soul that can say through me he did not get justice. No man has dared to come to me guilty and expect me to plead or lie for him. I cannot be bought; but I will fight through a burning hell to right a wrong. For this, many hate me, and the same ones respect me. I could be far more richer to-day than I am, but I am rich in consciousness. I have few friends, but they are loyal and true ones.

"I could talk for hours, but it will take just such happening to convince you. However much I might say, will only serve as a map by which you may journey. You must do your own traveling. Wisdom comes with experience and age.

"I am glad you came to me. I admire the man in you."

"And so do I."

Attorney Kempt looked to see his little sunbeam standing in the doorway.

Silas felt proud that he had come to this man for advice. He also told Mr. and Mrs. Dayton that afternoon, when he went to the farm.

"That is what I meant when I said go to the city by all means, if you are strong enough," explained Mr. Dayton.

Later that afternoon, Bob Dale said to Margaret. "I see your pious Mr. Miller is a crackerjack pool player; lost quite a sum of money last night; should have known better than to have played with those city fellows."

"Yes, he came to father this morning and told him of his experience and asked him his advice. You are just the meanest boys alive. You know he had never seen a pool game in his life before," said Margaret, her face almost purple with rage.

"Oh," said Bob, sheepishly, "did he tell your father?"

He had intended to put Margaret against Silas, but was very much fooled and felt rather afraid that Silas had exposed them by telling Mr. Kempt. Margaret stood waiting to see what else he was going to say, but he turned and walked slowly away.

Silas had paid dearly for his wits, but it had taught him to wax strong against temptation by so-called friends. He did not

wholly shun the boys, but was careful where he went and what he did.

He had just begun to realize the full meaning of his father's words, when he said, "I am afraid the city life will make you forget us and the thoughts of becoming a business man."

He thought of how weak he had been, how easily he had fallen when he had thought himself so strong. "I wondered at my father's fear, but now I know," he said to himself.

CHAPTER VI.

NET DETERMINES HER COURSE

"I want every boy and girl to do his and her best today," said Mr. Price, the teacher. "I am expecting the Examiner about two or three o'clock today. I want you to be attentive, pay strict attention to what he says and try to answer as best you can. Please do not get nervous and answer anything. If you do not know, keep quiet and say nothing."

This day was always an exciting day to the rural district school children. The Examiner was a dreaded visitor to them. He usually frightened them all so badly that half of them could not tell whether the sun rose in the east or west, or how old they were or what grade they were in. It was very trying for the teacher, who wished to have his scholars at their best.

It was nearly three o'clock. They had given up hopes that he would come that day, when there came a loud knock upon the door. Mr. Keller entered. He was a large,

red faced, red headed white man, with a heavy voice. "Good afternoon, scholars," he said, bowing to the boys on the right and the girls on the left. "Good afternoon, sir," came the weak response.

After hearing several classes recite, he called the sixth grade, which consisted of five scholars, Nett Miller being at the head of the class. Each child seemed well prepared as they answered question after question. Mr. Keller was pleased and praised both the teacher and pupils. "The little girl at the head of the class is an unusually bright colored child."

"How old are you?" was asked.

"Fifteen years old, sir."

After asking several other questions, he started at the foot of the class and asked each child what he or she intended to do.

Some said they didn't know. Others just shook their heads, and still others laughed. He seemed almost despaired at not getting any intelligent answers and was about to dismiss the class, when he asked, "Well, what does my little girl at the head of the class intend to be?"

Nett said in a loud, distinct voice, "An old maid and a trained nurse, sir." ✓

There was a loud roar of laughter, both

the teacher and the Examiner smiled, but Nett did not see anything funny about it.

Mr. Keller said, "Child, you have certainly chosen a noble field in which to work; you have the right idea—she who would seek her mission here, must make many sacrifices and could not do full justice to her work if a married woman. I am glad to know that at your age, you have some idea of what you should like to do."

Mr. Keller dismissed the class, talked awhile to the teacher, then left. There was a general snickering throughout the school-room. Nett Miller, one of the proudest girls in this county, wants to be an old maid," whispered the children among themselves. Mr. Price soon stopped the teasing and praised her for her good manner in speaking out so intelligently, and not giggling and laughing as did many of the pupils.

Nett wrote to Silas and told him how she had passed in her studies; she also added that she had been looking for a wife for him, but could not find a girl that seemed just right. She told him of all the little incidents that happened at school, but withheld her secret of wanting to go to the city to study to become a trained nurse.

School closed the tenth of May. Nett had

taken good care of the pigs, she worked late, and rose early in the morning. Her father, seeing how faithfully she worked, gave them entirely to her care.

About a week after school had closed, a farmer stopped one day to see if any of the Miller children were old enough to pick strawberries. Mrs. Miller thought that they were too busy at home to let them go, but Nett and little John begged so hard that at last she consented to let them go. "We have quite a number of school children, and that will make it pleasant for them," said the farmer. "I shall expect you all about seven o'clock in the morning. In the afternoon we pick from two until five."

Nett got her work done and retired early. She and little John could hardly wait until morning came. All the others had started picking when she and her brother arrived. "For goodness sake, look who's here!" they all exclaimed as they entered the patch. The foreman gave each a box and told them where to start.

"You must pick your vines clean, but be careful that the berries are not too ripe; you must not crush or mash them. Go slowly until you have learned to pick well. I am sure you will get along all right. What

you do not know, do not be afraid to ask me."

It was a day Nett never forgot; the dew was so heavy in the morning that she swore that she was nearly drowned; in the afternoon the sun became so hot that she nearly roasted. But, in spite of these obstacles, she stuck to her post. It was indeed amusing to see Nett Miller appear upon the scene the next day with old gloves and a veil that she had begged her step-mother to give her.

"Poor little saint; girls, I really think that Nett Miller is the proudest and vainest girl alive," said Mary Stewart.

"I must admit that she is proud, but not at all vain. She possesses the kind of pride that doesn't hurt," said Mattie King, a girl older than the others.

In spite of the pride and all that was said about her, Nett proved to be one of the best workers.

She worked hard; it was the first money she had ever earned. Each night she would count her checks to see how fast her dollars were growing.

"We only get a cent a quart, and if I want to make ten dollars, I shall have to learn to pick faster than I do," she said to her mother.

She planned to buy a new white dress, a hat and new shoes, and then give the balance to help buy new things for her little brothers.

It was on the last day of the picking. Nett returned home in high spirits with nine dollars and eighty-seven cents. Giving the money to her mother, she rushed off to feed the pigs, only to find one dead. Poor child, she was dumbfounded; she had worked so hard to keep them fat and healthy. And they were growing so nicely. Now, one had to go and die. She cried until her little heart nearly burst. Her father and mother tried to console her; they told her that in every business, one loses as well as gain.

"You have nine left out of ten, and it could have been nine dead and only one alive; you have much to be thankful for, Nett," said her father.

After this talk Nett was relieved, yet she was not contented.

Two days later, Nett counted out five dollars of her money; tying it in an old stocking, she went as fast as her feet would carry her to Mr. Baxter's.

"Well, well, Nett Miller, what brings you here so early this morning?"

"I came to buy a pig, sir."

"Holy smokes! are you going to raise pigs, too?"

"No, sir, Si left his in my care when he went away, and one of them had to die," said Nett, almost in tears.

"Well, don't look so hurt about it; we shall see what we can do."

Mr. Baxter left Nett standing in the barn yard while he went to look over his hogs. He returned a few minutes later driving a small young shoat before him.

"How about this one, Nett?"

"O, it is grand; it's a little larger than the one that died. How much is it, Mr. Baxter?"

"Why, I'll let you have it for two dollars."

Her heart leaped with joy; "I will still have money enough to buy my white dress and hat for Children's Day," she said, clapping her hands in childish glee.

She paid Mr. Baxter, and proudly drove "Jim" (as she named her new protege), home.

When her father returned from work that evening, Nett called him to see the pig she had bought. Mr. Miller was surprised.

"Where did you get it, Nett?"

"I bought it today, from Mr. Baxter."

"But, where did you get the money to

pay for it?" asked her father, more puzzled than he cared to show.

Seeing this, Nett said, "Why, papa, don't look scared to death; I cross my heart, I did not go out and rob any bank; I picked strawberries for three long weeks and made nearly ten dollars, so I took some of the money and bought the pig. I just couldn't rest, papa; I had to replace the one that died: I was afraid Si would think I had neglected them."

Mr. Miller laid his hand upon his daughter's head and said, "Nett, you are a darling. I am glad that you are so kind hearted; God will bless you for your good deeds, some day."

Had her father been able to witness the battle that occurred within Nett for two days; how she had struggled against the forces of selfishness and unselfishness, until she could not sleep; how these two spirits fought a mighty battle, one against the other, but unselfishness won. Nett gave up the white dress and the shoes to buy the pig. Had her father been able to witness that scene, he would have said, "Well done, my little girl."

This was the beginning; Providence had chosen this child for a purpose. The noble

characters which He had instilled within her had lain concealed in her bosom to grow to maturity. And now, the first to steal forth from its hiding place was the virtue of unselfishness. Like unto the rose-bud that can no longer retain the flower, but bursting forth, and, unfurling its petals, drinks in the dew, the air, and the sunshine; and in return, gives forth its sweet fragrance. So would Nett Miller give to the world noble deeds that would seem almost supernatural. This was the first time she had been brought to test, and she had not been found wanting. She was so overjoyed at having enough money left to buy the hat and dress that she had forgotten the shoes.

It was the Friday before Children's Day. She was showing her father her new hat and the dress her mother had made for her, when he asked, "Where are your shoes, dear? I thought you were going to buy new ones!"

"I did not get them, papa; I only made a little more than nine dollars. I gave mother three dollars to help get the other children ready, and after I got my hat and dress and paid for the pig, I did not have enough to buy new shoes. But mother bought a bottle of shoe polish, and I am going to polish

the old ones and put new strings in them. They will look all right."

Her father said nothing, but told her mother that night, if it took the last cent he possessed, Nett should have a new pair of shoes.

Sunday came, all the children were excited and in a hurry to get dressed. Nett had helped her mother all the morning with the younger ones, and went to get dressed herself; she had put on her stockings and reached for her shoes which she had placed beside the bed after she had polished them, early that morning. She opened wide her large, brown eyes when she found a pair of new black slippers in the place of the old polished shoes. "Am I awake? I certainly must be dreaming; no, it is true, brand new slippers."

Her father had come quietly up the stairs to take a look at her; it was a beautiful sight to him to see his child bending over, admiring the slipper on one foot, while she held the other in her hand. "Ain't they pretty?" she was saying to herself.

"Do you like them, dear?" asked her father, walking into the room.

"O, papa, you nearly frightened me to death."

*Really voice of
a child*

Rushing to him and putting her arms around his neck, she nearly smothered him with kisses.

"Papa, how did you know I wanted slippers?" she asked. "You don't know how happy you have made me."

Her father smiled and said, "If you make others happy, Nett, you too shall be happy."

Too young to know the full meaning of his words, she said, "I have never made anybody as happy as you have made me today, but I shall try, after this."

Years afterward, she put these words into effect.

CHAPTER VII.

STEP BY STEP

Two years have passed since Silas left. He had made one visit home. Nett and her father had sold some of the hogs and bought others. She had acquired a good business acumen.

While Silas worked in the North, she worked on the farm at home for him. He had shipped home several fine breeds of hogs that he had bought from Mr. Dayton.

Nett placed them in different lots, and, under no circumstances could she be persuaded to sell even one of them.

Silas had saved the amount of money he thought sufficient to start business on a larger scale with and was preparing to leave the North.

While foreman of Mr. Dayton's farm, he was loved by all the men employed there. No one ever thought of consulting Mr. Dayton concerning anything when Silas was near. It was always, "Where is Miller?" or "Ask Miller." In giving orders he always

used good manners; he never forgot to say "please" or "thank you." He showed no egotism, nor ever made the slightest reference to the position he held over them.

He had taken advantage of the evening business school at Bristol, a little town nearby, and was well prepared to begin his life's work.

In these two years he had seen enough of the life in the city to be well prepared against the sin and vice that existed anywhere.

Mr. Dayton gave him a letter of recommendation that would help him to obtain any position in the world. Handing it to him, he said, "Silas, I can't say enough for you. With your interest and willingness to serve, with the pride you manifest in your work, and with your determination, success is yours. Come to see us when you can, and write us often."

He went to say "Good-bye" to the few—we cannot say friends—acquaintances that he had made. Even Horace and Bob regretted his leaving, while they did not associate with him extensively, they had learned to esteem him for the interest he maintained in himself and the respect he had for others.

He said "good-bye" to Mrs. Kempt and Margaret; he went over to Attorney Kempt and said, "Mr. Kempt, I have come to say good-bye, and thank you for the advice you gave me; it has helped me so much."

Attorney Kempt stood with his hands on Silas' shoulders; looking down into Silas' face, he said, "This is the *little* man; I shall be waiting to hear of the *big* man. It may take years, Silas, but don't disappoint me; I shall be surprised should I hear that you had given up because a little effort confronted you."

"I shall do my best, Mr. Kempt." "That is all one can do."

"We shall be glad to see you at any time; I hope you will always think of us as real friends," said Mr. Kempt.

As he left the room, Margaret said, "Don't forget to write."

Two days later Silas Miller left the North to take up his work again in the South. He had been encouraged so much that he felt sure he would make good.

At home once more, he went to work in earnest. We see him today on his father's place, a proud young man of nineteen years. One could hardly deem it possible that it was the same Silas Miller who left here just a

little more than two years ago.

Even Aunt Mollie Noble said, "I do declar' he looks a heap bettah den befo'! an' I t'ink de North has tuk out some of them airs, too."

While the other boys bought horses and carriages to drive around and enjoy the evening hours, Silas put every dollar that he made into his business.

All the farmers around had begun to notice that Silas Miller had the best hogs in the country. It was indeed wonderful to notice how rapidly he progressed. In calling upon Silas, the farmers would shake their heads and say after learning his prices, "Miller, you are selling too high." Then there would follow a long talk; Silas had learned to talk well. He often rehearsed the business talk that he had heard Mr. Dayton and his customers engage in. The farmers would listen attentively, then say, "Well, Miller, I s'pose you're right, after all." They usually ended by paying him his price.

Nett was always by his side; she loved the work, but she always seemed to be thinking of something afar off.

One day Silas told her that he had rented a larger farm for the next year. "Our busi-

ness is getting so large we cannot stay here any longer. I shall also hire two more men."

"That is grand, Si, I know that you are happy."

"Yes," Nett, "I am; aren't you?"

"Well, y'e, yes, Si," she said, slowly. Silas noticed the unusual hesitation, as his sister, whom he loved so well, and asked, "What is it, Nett? You have worked so hard and faithfully for me; without your help, I could not have gotten on. You stayed here and worked while I was away, but Nett, you don't seem so happy. You know, if you don't tell me, I cannot help you."

Nett stood thinking for a while, then said, "Silas, I want to go to the city to study to become a trained nurse."

If Nett had told her brother that she wanted to go to Africa to catch tigers he could not have looked any more horror-stricken.

"Oh, Nell! You go to the city?" His heart nearly stopped beating.

"Yes, Si, I cannot stay here; something seems to call me, this is not my sphere."

Like a flash, the thoughts of what he had seen and heard in the city dawned upon him; he had heard men vie with each other in trying to win girls to their way of living.

He had seen girls dancing, thinly clad, in cabarets—young and beautiful girls. He had seen others staggering from hotels, half drunk, in the late hours of the night, and most of these girls, he had been told, had migrated from the South. They had come of good, Christian families, but, not being properly prepared against the evils of the city, they soon fell an easy prey to these things, which at first seemed harmless.. “My God, if Nett would fall to such evils, it would drive me crazy. She is a woman, and, if she should lose her character and virtue, however innocent she may be, the world would never forgive her; she would carry the stain to her grave. But, how can I say ‘No?’ He looked again at his sister, and, for the first time, he saw that she was a woman, not the little Nett he had always thought of; childhood had flown, there she stood at the age of seventeen, in the full bloom of youth, and at the most critical period of her life.

Nett, seeing the shadows upon her brother’s face, asked, “What is the matter, Si?”

He drew a long breath and said, “Nett, it would grieve me to see you go to the city alone and unprotected. You do not know how many temptations exist there; it takes

a strong-minded person, and one with a deal of foresight, to resist them, and I am afraid the strongest often falls."

"But, Si, you went and returned all right."

"Yes, I went and returned but——."

His voice faltered; Nett saw that there was something that seemed unpleasant for him to recall. Then he told her the whole story of his temptation. After he had finished, Nett said, "But you are better and stronger than ever before."

"Yes, sister, but it seems that the scar will always remain; yet I cannot be selfish; we will talk the matter over with father and mother. If they are willing, I must be, too."

At supper that night, Silas told his parents of Nett's wish. At first they both were inclined to say no, but when they saw the pleading look in her eyes, they realized how good and faithful she had been, and consented to her wish—who could have said "no" to this girl?

About a week later Silas made a business trip to town. Upon his return he called Nett and told her that he had good news for her, but she must guess what it was.

"No, I cannot guess; please do not hold me in suspense."

“Mrs. Thompson stopped me today and asked me if I thought you would like to go to Philadelphia to live with her daughter who has recently married. I told her that you were thinking of going away in the near future. She told me to tell you that her daughter, Mrs. Schafer, would like you to do light housework for her; she also said she would give you good wages and take good care of you.”

“Silas, that is fine; I shall never have words to thank you.”

Turning to her parents, she asked them if it would be all right. Poor Mr. Miller nearly groaned at the thought of his only daughter leaving them, but he knew that she could not get sufficient education in the country to become a trained nurse. He told her if she would do as well as Si had done, he would be willing that she should go.

Mrs. Thompson called to see Mrs. Miller about Nett. She was charmed with the manner of the young colored girl, so cultured and refined. It was soon settled that she should go.

If Silas' going away had caused much comment, Nett caused more. When Aunt Mollie heard the news, she made many vigorous attacks upon her snuff box before

she said anything; then she said, "I s'pose John Miller thinks dis goin' away plan is all right. It may be all right for dee boy, but for de sak ob me, I caint see how he has de heart to sen' dat li'l gal away; but, I s'pose she'll git along all right, 'cayse she seems lak she's mo' fitted fo' an angel in Heab'n den any whars I knows ob. She done choosed a good work, 'cause she'll make a good Nu'se fo' de po' an' de 'flicted."

As Nett grew to womanhood she was loved by all. The little Sunday School class that she had taught for over four years loved her as few women are loved by children other than their own mothers. Hearing that she was about to leave them, they saved their pennies and bought her a little prayer book with these words inscribed upon the back: *By their fruits ye shall know them.*

On the first day of April, Nett left home to take her place amongst the thousands of women toilers of the city. That morning she felt sad when she saw her little brothers standing with tearful eyes, waiting to say "good-bye," but she played her part well. "Now please don't look as if I were about to start upon a funeral march; I am going to write you long letters every

week and tell you all I see and do," she said gayly as she came down the stairs. "And, of course, you know I will spend my vacation here, on this glorious old spot, as your guest."

She said so many other funny things that everybody was soon laughing. Silas felt the worst. "I am losing my right hand, my best friend, but one good turn deserves another. This rural life is too narrow for our ambitions, unselfish, broad-minded Nett."

He thought again and again to warn her against considering every acquaintance she chanced to meet, a confidential friend, but he thought it best to let her use her own judgment. With this decision, he kissed her good-bye.

The next morning Nett Miller awoke to find herself in a strange city, among strange people. But ere she had been here long, she had made a few warm friends. She was well liked by everybody. Mrs. Schafer taught her her way of working; she was very quick to learn, but found things so different from what she had been used to in her humble home in the South.

She wrote home at the end of each week as she had promised. Her letters were long and interesting, and so funny that all roared

with laughter until the end was reached.

One day Mrs. Schafer invited some company to supper. After eating, they congratulated Mrs. Schafer on the well-prepared meal and asked where they got such a good girl. She told them that she had come from the South and had been with them only a short while. "She is an unusual girl, and seems to take more interest in her work than most girls who work out and whose main object is to just get through some how. She seems more like one of the family than a servant. I do hope she will stay with us for years." Mr. Schafer added, "Yes, but I am afraid that she is not made to be a house servant long; in several cases I have seen such girls who proved far more intelligent and rose to great heights than the persons by whom they were employed."

"I find that that is very true, especially amongst the colored people," said Mr. Catlin. "From experience, I find that the white man can seldom fathom the Negro; I know of one particular case that I often recall. A young colored boy worked for an intimate friend of mine. He worked there several years, then he left, telling them he was going to follow another vocation; he being a colored boy, they paid little or no attention

to this remark. After that, he would call unexpectedly some time during each year to see if they had any extra work they wanted done. They always found something for him to do, as they liked him and the children went wild about 'Tom.' To us he did not show any knowledge above that of a mere working boy, but he possessed good manners, quiet, clean habits. Often, we both referred to these good qualities in him and gave the cause to the fact that he had worked for our race of people since a child. The real fact was—it takes the keenest and most scientific white man to discover the great, deep qualities of the black man. My friend was one of the greatest surgeons of the State, but it never once occurred to him to talk of his great knowledge of medical science to that boy. Years passed and they had seen nor heard nothing of Tom. One day my friend was called to witness a very difficult operation; he has told me more than a dozen times that he was nearly dumb-founded to learn that the doctor who was to perform the operation was colored; and when he looked more closely and found it was Tom, his surprise was complete."

"Yes," said Mr. Schafer. "I have thought from the first that Nett is a girl for far great-

er service than ours."

Nett overheard part of the conversation as she flitted here and there doing her work. "Yes," she said to herself, "and here's another colored child somebody's going to hear from in years to come," clapping her hands playfully.

As anxious as Nett was to work, she often grew homesick and would sometimes cry, but she said nothing of this in her letters.

Mrs. Schafer found that they lived near a church owned by colored people. She told Nett this, and made it convenient for her to attend Sunday School there every Sunday afternoon. Nett found it very much different here than the little chapel in the country where she had attended Sunday School since a little girl. There everybody knew her and was glad to see her; here they hardly noticed her. She was assigned to a class, but they all being city-raised girls, were barely civil to her. She did not mind this much as she did not intend to let so small a thing spoil her career.

Mrs. Schafer saw that she was fond of reading and gave her free access to the library. This helped Nett and proved to be great company for her.

Unlike most ladies who employ help, Mrs.

✓ Schafer did not think that a servant was a mere machine to grind out work day by day without a little recreation. She would find out if any of her friends had good colored girls, then she would make arrangements for Nett to go out with them, to see some of the city sights, such as Willow Grove, to photo-plays and other good places of amusement. When she could not find the right girls she took Nett herself. She took her to the large department stores and taught her how to buy good materials and not cheap, gaudy things. Mrs. Schafer also encouraged her to save a little money each month out of her wages. This she did not have to ever refer to, because it was Nett's one idea to save money to enter the training school for nurses.

Several ladies were having a tea with Mrs. Schafer one afternoon when one of the ladies, a Mrs. Gregg, asked her how did she manage to keep a girl so long.

"By treating her like a human being," answered Mrs. Schafer.

✓ "I don't find any worth treating as a human being," said Mrs. Wise. "If you treat them right, they don't appreciate it and by the time you have them trained into your way of working, they will walk off to some

other place for a few pennies more."

"I think it takes a fair-minded employer and a good, conscientious employee to get along good," said Mrs. Schafer.

"That's patting your own self on the back," snapped Mrs. Gregg.

"Well, maybe I am a little conceited," answered Mrs. Schafer, "but nevertheless, I always keep my girls, you see that, I suppose."

"Yes, some people will tolerate any kind of a girl, to keep from doing their work themselves," said Mrs. Gregg, conclusively.

"Hand it to me, Mrs. Gregg, I think that you will find my house as well kept as any," answered Mrs. Schafer, good-naturedly.

"See here, ladies, don't let us get on cross terms about hired girls; life is too short for such things, and you, Mrs. Schafer, wait until you have been hiring girls for thirty year, then you can talk," said Mrs. Baird, who was very quiet and had had little to say.

At this remark the ladies turned their conversation to other interesting things.

Nett met several girls who worked near her. She told them of her chosen course and how she planned to work for her education. To her surprise, they did not seem at

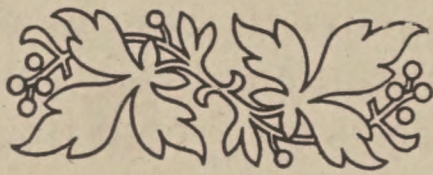
all interested, nor did they encourage her. They told her that she was crazy to work herself to death and deprive herself of clothes and pleasure just to go to school. One of the girls asked her if she ever intended to catch a city beau and if she did, she certainly would have to dress better. "No," said Nett, with a gleam of heated defiance in her eyes, "I hope you do not think that I came all the way up from the South to work to catch a city beau, and if I did, I am sure I would let him do the 'catching.' "

But her temper softened when she thought that they did not understand her. She talked long, trying to show them how education lifted them above the masses of the peoples and fitted them to deal proficiently with the difficult things of the world that confronted her race at a period when the best men and women obtainable are in great demand to help the less fortunate of the coming generation.

Poor Nett's words fell like seed on a desert's waste, they could neither grasp nor absorb them. Even while she talked, they would be winking and calling her the preacher in undertone voices. It made her weep to think that she could not make the others see or understand things as she did.

Nett Miller did not know that she lived far ahead of her time. Her thoughts and ideas were too progressive for their weak and undeveloped mind. Many have been like Nett Miller, striving and struggling to convince others to see their ideas of thinking and doing; such persons often die wrecked and heart-broken, but years afterward, while they slept the eternal sleep, the seed that they have sown took root and slowly pushed through the uncultivated soil. Such seeds would be readily recognized.

Dear readers, if you are striving to convince this slow-awakening race to some idea or purpose, do not tire, if at first they seem unable to grasp your meaning. Ere many years have passed, if not you, others will see the efforts of your work.



CHAPTER VIII.

“I SHALL NOT ALWAYS BE CALLED A NIGGER”

Several years passed since Silas Miller stood in the field on Mr. Baxter's farm with tears streaming down his face and in hot rebellion uttered the words that head this chapter. It seems that he is about to make good this statement. He purchased the large farm, the farm which he had told Nett of the day she expressed her desire to go to the city. Now, after six months, it was not large enough. The demand for hogs was far greater than he could fill. The feeding and care of them were great responsibilities. He employed several men, but one knows it is hard to get help who will take real interest in such work. This made Silas work hard during the day, and plan and think out the difficult problems at night. Several times he thought of trying to persuade Nett to come back and help him. He had already employed a girl from town to help in the office with the letters and the bills. But,

not being so well experienced she could not keep pace with the heavy work. He knew that Nett could manage things better, yet he was afraid that if he did so, he would change her plans. She had helped him to get his start. Silas had become the chief object of interest in Kent County. Each day some farmer would say to another, "Have you bought any of Miller's hogs?" Or, in answer to where they could buy some good hogs, they would say, "Have you tried at Miller's? He is said to have the best hogs in this State." Others would say to some of their friends, "Don't you know that Miller is going ahead fast, give him a few years longer and he will be at the top of the ladder." And still others referred to him as "that smart black man," but no one ever called him "Nigger"—he had passed that stage.

Silas already saw the necessity of a good typist to attend to his work. He tried several times to obtain one, but it seemed a difficult task. None of the city girls cared to come to the country to live, and typists in the country were as scarce as "hen teeth." Silas thought often of Margaret Kempt. He had written to her occasionally, as he had promised, and she answered promptly each

time. But he thought she did so just to make good her promise.

Margaret had completed her course at the business school and was working in her father's office. She had grown to be a beautiful young woman, quiet and reserved. Many called her vain, but when they knew her well, they loved her. Many young men called and tried to interest Margaret, but she treated them all alike. Leonard Morgan, the son of one of Mr. Kempt's most intimate friends, had called frequently. Both families had looked forward to this match, but Margaret could not be persuaded to entertain the slightest interest in him. Leonard Morgan was everything that one could wish a young man to be, having graduated from the School of Pharmacy at one of the leading colleges; he was also well accomplished in music. He belonged to several well-known clubs, and was one of the foremost young men in the younger social set. Most girls would have gladly accepted him, but Margaret was only sociably polite.

Both her father and mother wished to see their only daughter well-stationed in married life, and insisted that she should accept Mr. Morgan.

One day her father reminded her that she

should be more sociable and courteous to the young callers. "You know, Margaret, you are my all, and ———."

Margaret did not let her father finish; she went to where he was sitting, putting her arms around his neck, she said, "Dear Dad, you and mother are *my* all. I cannot think of leaving you yet, besides, I want to be free years and years to enjoy this glorious life. Furthermore, Papa, these young men disgust me; I cannot tolerate them. All they think of is women, and women and sport. I wish I had wings, I would fly away and find men who could find something sensible to talk about."

"Yes, Margaret, I know that we all love each other, but it would be so selfish if we would wish to keep you to ourselves. God gave you to us late in life; we are both getting old. This life is short, but death is certain. It would grieve me to leave you alone and unprotected. Margaret, darling, I would be happy to see you married to some good, young man; besides, mother and I would love to hold a little grandchild in our arms." Mr. Kempt's words were soft and pleading. It was a beautiful sight to see father and daughter sitting with their arms around each other. Her jet black hair was

against his silvery gray hair.

Margaret thought a while, then said, "When I find a young man who really loves me for what I am, and *not* for what shall be mine some day; when I find a man that can honor good womanhood and appreciate me because I have tried to live to be a good woman, then, father, I shall marry; but," Margaret shook her head sadly, and said "But Dad, I am afraid I shall have a long wait."

Attorney Kempt looked aghast at his child, so young, so pure and innocent, but by no means ignorant of the ways of men.

"Dad, if I should marry, I shall ask God to give me sons, a half-dozen sons, then I would spare nothing to teach them the sacred duty toward women. To have good women we *must* have better men. Don't you think, Father, that men would be different if they were taught from childhood, by their parents, the sacredness of the virtue of women?"

The great ,learned attorney bowed his head and said, "Yes, daughter, you are right, I guess."

When Margaret went back to her desk, her father sat long, with his head resting in his hands, buried in deep thought. Here

sat a man thinking and thinking upon a subject that should have required no thought for him. He was a man that few men could approach with any subject that he could not readily and openly converse on. The great problems that confront races and nations to-day were naught to him. Many had heard this learned man in the courts where he spoke concisely and with great ease. They had commended on his great ability of discussion, but to-day he faltered and stammered before the simple question of his daughter. His little Margaret, whom he had planned to make one of the leading belles of the city, and whom he had hoped would marry into some wealthy family of his associates, had chosen an entirely different course. He saw the great love of purity ebbing through her soul, and the effect was that she wanted sons, that she might teach them the sacredness of man's duty toward woman that the women of her race might be better.

How openly she had talked with hem, and in these years he had said nothing to help his girl to battle against the temptation of men. He had willingly ushered young men into his home without a thought of their care for his child; without thought of their

intentions, whether good or bad. He wondered if his wife had told Margaret any of these things; they had both taught her etiquette of social life, how to choose company from the best of families, but the deep things which Margaret had spoken of to-day, seemed to him so immodest until he heard them from the lips of his own daughter. "There must be something wrong or Margaret would not have wished to bring sons into the world to make better men," thought her father.

This conversation made father and daughter inseparable companions. Mr. Kempt told Margaret many things that fathers should tell their daughters. He found that it was his duty as well as the mother's.

One day, after Margaret and her mother had had some heated words over Mr. Morgan, Mr. Kempt came in and found them both in tears. "Mother, I know both you and I would like to see Margaret marry Leonard. To us, he seems to be an ideal man, but we must not interfere. I am sure that she can be trusted to choose a good husband. Margaret and I have talked a great deal together, lately, and I find that she has noble ideas. We will let her instinctive powers lead her to the right man. We must

not let this thing make a gulf between us. I strictly forbid that this matter should ever be mentioned to her again." Then Mr. Kempt kissed both women who were so dear to him, and the source of all his happiness.

A few weeks after this conversation Margaret received a letter from Silas. After reading it, she went to her father and asked him to guess who the letter was from. "I don't know, dear, you get so many letters I am afraid I'd have a fine time guessing."

"Well, if you have given it up, I shall have to tell you. It's from Silas Miller, and just look, Dad ——." Margaret held up a hand full of circulars and advertising matter. A long folding card contained a picture of the farm and buildings; here and there were large groups of hogs scattered over several lots and many fields of growing grain.

Mr. Kempt took the card and looked at it for some time. He read how Silas Miller, the coming Hog King of the State, had worked his way from a single litter of six hogs, in a little back lot, to the ownership of a three-hundred-acre farm and thousands of the best hogs in the country. "Wonderful," exclaimed Mr. Kempt, "I knew from the first day that I saw him that he would make a good man." Mr. Kempt read Silas' letter

to Margaret. Silas invited Margaret and her parents to come to see him, and said, "I shall never forget how you made it easy for me to bear the loneliness of being away from home, and how your father's words helped me when I was heartbroken over the money which I lost in the pool room that night, due to my ignorance of the game. Margaret, you do not know how your words "when you go back on the farm" made me stick more firmly to the promise that I made father before leaving home. I am doing fine, but am putting every effort forward to do better, each year of my life. Nett, my dear sister, is in your city. She expects to enter a training school for nurses there, in the near future. You cannot imagine how much I miss her. At first, it seemed almost impossible to get along without her help. Her advice has always been so helpful, and she could do so many little things that I would never have thought of. I do hope some day that you two shall meet. It would make me so happy."

Silas wrote a long letter. After reading it, Mr. Kempt marveled at the splendid manhood. Only a country lad, not yet twenty-three years old, and to have braved such vicissitudes to become an independent man.

Handing the letter back to Margaret, he said, "A thoroughbred young man, dear."

"Yes, father, I think he's great."

That night Margaret lay awake thinking of Silas and Nett. She recalled all her acquaintances among young men, but not one measured up to Silas Miller. "My friends may laugh at me for liking a country boy, but who could help liking Silas! I certainly would be glad to meet Nett," so musing she fell asleep.

Time passed quickly by. Nett had just returned from her vacation. She worked six months longer, then Mrs. Schafer helped to gain admittance to ——— Hospital. It was hard work, but not a girl in the class was more industrious or faithful to duty than Nett Miller. When the other girls murmured and complained about the unpleasant work of a probationer, she was always cheerful and willing.

She had chosen her course and accepted whatever duties assigned her without complaint. This won for her great commendation from the hospital staff, but made her less popular amongst the members of her class. They called her "green-horn" and accused her of seeking favoritism of the instructors and trying to attract the atten-

tion of the internes. They were jealous and would not associate with her, but she did not for once heed their uncultured remarks or petty taunts.

The patients with whom she came in contact all loved her. It was always, "Where is Miss Miller?" or "Can Miss Miller wait on me?" and it was always Nett who took the place of others when off duty. Often she would do the work of two, trying to help some girl along. When off duty she would read and write long, interesting letters home, and take long walks. She was always quiet and thoughtful most of the time, but, like other girls, she liked fun and friends; yet, both seemed to be denied her.

It was near Christmas; all the girls were looking forward to the holidays; each was expecting something from home. Nett knew she would get a check from Silas, but when she went to breakfast Christmas morning, she was surprised to find two packages, one was a box of candy and the other contained a beautiful fountain pen. Nett stood speechless, "Who could have sent them? And the pen is just what I needed."

"O, girls, look what I have, but I can't imagine who sent them," she explained.

"Oh, Nett Miller, you can't bluff us, you are always trying to play 'Meeky Moses;' you know some of your numerous admirers sent them," said Daisy Smith.

Nett did not reply to this remark, and Anna Gould added, "Nett makes me tired, she tries to be Miss Goody-good, and there isn't a doctor here that hasn't got his eyes open."

"Now, girls, don't tell tales out of school," said Lucy Beck.

"Oh, it doesn't matter, let them enjoy themselves," said Nett in an indignant manner, not understanding the sarcasm in Lucy Beck's remark.

Several days after Christmas one of the strictest rules of the hospital was broken by some of the nurses; no one seemed to know who did it, and the guilty one would not acknowledge the deed.

Anna Gould frankly declared that Nett Miller did it. She had always been envious of Nett and took this opportunity to give vent to her feelings by saying something to reflect upon her character, or demerit her in her class.

Poor Nett's heart nearly failed her when she thought of the disgrace of being demerited and the hard work she would have

to do as a punishment for an act she had not committed.

When the Superintendent asked her about it, she said, "I will tell you truthfully, I did not do it; but I can take the punishment and save some poor, unfortunate girl who is too narrow-minded to admit her own guilt. It is hard, but I can bear it for her sake."

All the girls hung their heads, they had suspected a heated resentment from Nett, but she took the unjust accusation so submissively that it struck home to the heart of every girl, yet none dare to own the deed.

Miss Wolf, Superintendent of the Hospital, not being too courteous with the girls, and who never let them forget her authority to rule, said, "Miss Miller, you shall do double duty beginning tonight, for one week; it must be understood that rules in this place cannot be broken, and, if so, that person or persons must bear the penalty."

Nett went on duty that night with heart aflame with anger. While she accepted the blame, she was wholly guiltless and could not help feeling the sting of shame. But, when she heard the groans of the sick and dying, all was forgotten. Her heart swelled with pity, "I should thank God that I am

able to do duty, instead of being angry," she thought to herself. She then went quietly among her patients humming within herself her favorite hymn:

"Does Jesus care when the way seems
dark,

Too deep for mirth or pain."

She had hardly begun her work when she heard whispers amongst the patients, "Miss Miller is on duty." Everyone loved her; she was so patient, so kind, and the very touch of her soft, brown hands seemed to ease the severest pain.

Nett did not know that, as she moved to and fro, straightening a pillow here to make a patient more comfortable, or coaxing another to try to sleep, or to wipe a tear from the eyes of a poor, home-sick soul, that two eyes were watching her; nor did she know that this noble deed had lifted her to the heights of angels in the eyes of the one who watched. But she did know that Dr. Lionel came and asked her how she was getting along. "Oh, fine, I thank you," she replied. He said nothing more. Nett so loved her work that she soon forgot she was being punished for another's deed.

Dr. Lionel, one of the internes at the hospital, knew who had broken the rule, and

he had gone purposely that night, to see how Nett worked. He had watched for more than half an hour before he said anything. He had suspected to find her pouting and sulking; but, when he saw her at work, and heard her sweet, soft voice speaking so gently to the patients, he said to himself, "I have never seen such a woman; she is an angel of pity." He had seen and knew who had broken the rule and had also heard the plot to put the blame on Nett.

At the table, or wherever Nett met the other girls, they felt somewhat penitent to see that she was not even angry with them. The memory of her deed would never be erased from their hearts.

Several times Miss Dunn urged Anna Gould to let her tell the truth about it. "I think you are the silliest goose that ever was born, if you ever were born; sometimes I doubt if you were, you have so little sense. Now the thing is forgotten and you want to stir it up again; I don't see where Nett is any the worse off for setting up a few nights when it was not her turn. Maybe she will let her head down a little now, and not go around looking like some saint just dropped from the sky. It will give a good chance to be an angel, because we usually

pay for everything in this world."

"Yes, Anna, I am afraid we do," replied Katie Dunn.

But Anna Gould did not fully realize the meaning of the words, "we pay."



CHAPTER IX.

OBSTACLES

We go on in life working, hoping, contemplating success. But it is not the nature of man to contemplate failure. This we accept generally without premeditation, but as failures are often hidden blessings how much better it is to happen in early life, when we are young and can easily eradicate the pangs of disappointments. As it is in youth when we can withstand the scene of shadowed air castles or day dreams without losing hope. It is at this period of life we can with little encouragement work through.

Since his return to the farm, Silas had been rapidly sailing on peaceful waters, but like a thunder bolt out of clear skies, came a disease. An epidemic, that wrought havoc among the hogs of all the farmers in several States, the South being the most effected. The best veterinarians were summoned, and every known drug made for dumb animals was used, but to little or no avail. Poor Silas was compelled to watch some of his

best breed entirely wiped out, and little hopes for the surviving ones.

Farmers visited farmers in hopes of gaining some helpful information, for it seemed that each within himself had given up all hopes. Even when facing a thing that seemed hopeless, Silas Miller displayed that same determination that had brought him thus far.

"Miller, we are done for," he would be told several times during the day, and when Mr. Poland, a well-to-do white farmer said, "Miller, it is all up with us," Silas shook his head and answered, "No, Mr. Poland, there must be something, if we can only find it."

"Well, Si, if there is anything, you go and find it, and I hope a shad may shoot me, if there is a farmer within a hundred miles that won't buy it from you, excusing the price," said Mr. Poland in an indignant manner.

"That is what I'm going to do," answered Silas with a little touch of that old confidential air that he usually possessed when being repulsed by another.

On his way home, Silas met Mr. Baxter. "Good morning, Si. How are things going over your way?"

"I cannot complain, Mr. Baxter. I have

lost a great many hogs, but to the present, I have managed to save the greater portion."

"Then, I must say, boy, the gods seem to have been with you. I have lost every single hog, that I owned."

"But remember, Mr. Baxter, I have about twenty times as many as you, so I may not be any more blessed, but I have more to give."

"That is true, too. I must say, Si, you are the most optimistic young man that I have ever known. You have an act of seeing rays of sunlight behind the darkest clouds."

"True to the old race, Mr. Baxter. I am now on my way to see if I cannot find something to help fight this terrible disease."

"If there is anything to be found, you will find it, Si Miller," said Mr. Baxter, laughing.

"Let us hope."

"If there is anything I can do to help, do not fail to let me know, Si."

for home in a more hopeful spirit. On reaching home he found his father standing in

Silas thanked Mr. Baxter, and started the doorway looking very downcasted.

"Father, please don't look as if the world

has come to an end," he said in a cheerful manner.

"I am mighty glad you can take things so lightly," his father answered almost abruptly. "With all the work and money and time and everything you have in this business, and to see things going the way they are, appears to me you would be mighty nigh crazy, and for the life of me, I can't see that things are getting any better."

"Dad, it is the hand of fate," said Silas.

Mr. Miller fairly groaned. It seemed to him that Silas had lost all sense of reasoning.

Seeing that his father was completely discouraged with his optimisticness, Silas put his hands gently on his father's shoulder in his old familiar way and said, "Dear Dad, to become a good business man, you must expect failure with success, and one must also be a good loser. Yes, I do realize I have put much in this business, but in this life, we can't expect more than we are willing to give."

"Then, I don't suppose I have given much because it seems I don't get much."

"Now, Dad, you know you are wrong. You are a rich man, and I dare say there

are thousands that envy you this very moment."

Mr. Miller looked at Silas as if he thought he had been suddenly bereft of his senses, but before he had time to ask what on earth did he mean, Silas continued by saying, "Just think of Nett, Dad! How much in cash would you take for her?"

The clouds immediately disappeared from his father's face.

"Silas, child, in all the years of my life, I have never thought of such a thing. Well, there is not enough money in the United States Treasury or even in the entire world, to buy, not only Nett, but a single child I have."

"Then Dad, you possess priceless jewelry."

Mr. Miller stood thinking, while Silas went to his little room, where he had spent many hours trying formula after formula. His heart was heavy, but he dare not waver in hopes. He worked far into the night, hoping ere the dawn of another day, that something could be found, but the morning's mail brought an added burden.

Officials of several States had issued a rigid warning *To all farmers holding hogs affected or likely to be infected must be killed*

within ten days after the issue of warning unless a permanent cure has been produced. All persons keeping such hogs on their premises would be subject to imprisonment or heavy fine or both.

In spite of Silas Miller's forced optimistic-ness, when he read this statement, he bowed his head and wept. It seemed as if this was more than he could bear. He wrote a long letter to Nett and one to Margaret. How anxiously he waited for Nett's answer which he knew would be full of hope and encouragement. In the return mail came Margaret's answer, full of sympathy, and several lines from Attorney Kempt which gave strength to hope, but Nett, why don't she write? He wondered at her delay, she who was always so punctilious. Oh! I suppose she is writing a book. Her letters are always so long.

Several days passed; then came Nett's reply. When Silas took the letter handed to him by the rural post delivery, it was so thin that he held it up to see if it contained anything beside the envelope. "Oh I suppose poor Nett is so tired trying to bear everybody else burdens and we can't blame her either," he soliloquized as he opened the letter. All it contained was a little verse

clipped from a book or magazine and pinned to half sheet of paper, which read:

“Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days are dark and dreary.”

—Tennyson.

Beneath this Nett wrote:

Dear Silas:

Tennyson wrote this for you. Don't give up hope.

Lovingly,
NETT.

Silas was so disappointed that it was some time before he could really grasp the meaning of that verse. He read and re-read it until at length he realized the strength of the words. “Yes, the great poet has in that one verse expressed more than Nett could have written in six long letters. But Nett is my very own, and one word from her is more to me than volumes from the greatest poets that the world has ever produced,” Silas said as he placed the letter in a little drawer in his desk.

Days passed rapidly on with no signs of relief. It was on the eve of the fifth day

since the State had issued the order. Driven almost to despair, Silas went to his room immediately after supper. He wrung his hands in anguish, as he thought of the sacrifices he had made, and the struggles he had endured, and now it seemed that it were to end so.

Silas like most men and women as they prosper in life and rise to position and wealth, they are inclined to lean away from religion or its teaching. He had not become wholly skeptical, he was just too busy for such things, but God has a way of jogging our memories sometime. As he sat there thinking, slowly came the memories of his boyhood teachings. He recalled how a few years hence he had climbed the stairs to the dark and lonely bed room. How he had knelt beside the little pallet bed and asked that God whom his humble mother had taught him to ever serve and trust, to care for him and now when he should have trusted Him, he had nearly forgotten. Without further meditation, he knelt beside his bed and prayed for divine help to fight this epidemic. He lacked that great childish faith as in former days, but he felt relieved.

Aunt Mollie Noble had suffered much from rheumatism, and had been forced to stay

at home the greater part of the time, so had missed much of the news and gossip of the neighborhood. When Mrs. Lee, one of the neighbors, brought her the startling news that there was a terrible disease amongst the hogs, and that they were all dying, and what wasn't dying would be killed in the next few days, Aunt Mollie exclaimed, "What's dat, you say? My Lor, child, what's dat?"

"Yes'um, its true, and dere is Si Miller, dey say his'm all dying, and I s'pose his all gits killed too. Bless de Lor," said Aunt Mollie.

As Mrs. Lee did not see anything to bless the Lord for, she continued, "Well, you know, Aunt Mollie, 'taint no use for us colored folks to be reaching up so high and trying to get rich like the white folks, for we is shur to get fetched down."

If Mrs. Lee had expected a hearty response in her favor, she must have been both disappointed and astonished when Aunt Mollie answered barely audibly, "Um-hum." In fact Mrs. Lee looked up as if she thought Aunt Mollie had not quite understood her, because when it came to condemning prosperity, Aunt Mollie Noble seldom or never had to think for words. Instead she sat

with folded arms staring into space. She had so little to say that Mrs. Lee asked, "if she was feeling well," to which she replied, "Just tolerable, Sister Lee. But I am thinking about poor Si. 'Tis likely he would be de most 'fected around here. It sho does seem ashamed for de chile, he has wurk so hard, but why don't they send for some of dem animal doctors from the city?"

"They has done everything Aunt Mollie, and dat is the reason they are going to kill the hogs to see if they can't stop it."

Aunt Mollie sat down in her old rocker and began rocking and thinking. She had so little to say that Mrs. Lee soon left. A few minutes later, Aunt Mollie climbed the rickety old stairs that led to the attic. Pushing the little door aside she said, "I wonder if I kin git through here. It has bin many a day since I was up here, and this doorway looks mighty small for my size." After a rather squeezing effort, she managed to get through it. "It's mighty dark and dusky, up har, and dat little window don't let in much light, but I know de old trunk a mile away," she said as she stepped cautiously over the creaking boards.

She soon found the prize piece of paper. "Dat's it," she exclaimed, wiping the dust

away. "I knowed it was in there. I will run over to get Mary Liza's gal to put it on another piece of paper, as this is about to drop to pieces.

Aunt Mollie had always been known to be the greatest prayer in the church; besides, being one of its strongest supporters. Each rising generation had been taught these things about her, until it seemed that no one ever thought of her possessing another virtue. In fact, the young people had long since found it impossible to listen to a well-prepared sermon without being annoyed almost to distraction by her numerous ejaculations.

Often the young minister just from Morgan College, and eager to show to his congregation how well he had prepared himself to teach the Scripture, would be forced to stop in the middle of his sermon to let Aunt Mollie have a good shout. At other times he could succeed in keeping her quiet by repeatedly saying, "Now, Sister Noble, listen," and then at the end of each sentence, she would yell at the top of her voice, "A-A-men!"

If he could just keep her at this point, he would be satisfied, but the congregation would be interestedly listening to him in-

toning the Scripture, when Aunt Mollie would suddenly throw up her hands and send forth several loud shrieking screams, while the startled congregation would be wondering what had happened. She would shout: "Preach it! Preach it!" Then everybody knew Aunt Mollie was in the spirit, and every young girl within an arm's reach would feel shaky about her spring bonnet; and every young man would eye anxiously his prize panama held by some young girl, because when Aunt Mollie was in the spirit she was no respecter of hats nor heads. Many a young lass had returned from church carrying the remains of her hat in her hand, while the lads usually left theirs to the fate of the sweeper.

To all who knew her, this was about the length of her religion, and the entire community would have been surprised could they have witnessed her movements now.

When she had gotten the recipe re-written, she made hasty preparation to make her secret call on Silas Miller the next morning. Silas had just finished breakfast, and had gone to his little office when he heard Aunt Mollie's voice, "Good morning, Brother Miller, how's all this morning?" he heard her ask his father. "Goodness me, here comes

the old gossip; I do hope she'll stay out there and talk to father and mother, as I am in no frame of mind to listen to a lot of nonsense this morning." He had barely uttered the words when she knocked at the office door. Silas moved slowly toward it with a mind to tell her he was so busy that he could not receive callers. But when he opened the door, Aunt Mollie popped in without an invitation.

Seating herself in the first chair she saw, she asked, "How is you to-day, Si?"

"Oh, fairly well, Aunt Mollie, how are you?"

"Well, just tolerable," she replied.

Instead of being annoyed, Silas found he felt rather kindly towards the old lady. He often said afterwards that something he had never seen before shone in her face.

"How is you making out, honey," she asked in a voice so full of sympathy and tenderness that he replied, "Oh, Aunt Mollie, we are done for, there is no help."

"Now, Si, don't say that, chile, has you prayed?"

"Yes, Aunt Mollie," answered Silas, bowing his head, yet he was conscious of a slight embarrassment or shame, at which Aunt

Mollie took no notice, for she replied, "Thank God."

Reaching her hand far down in the bosom of her waist she drew forth a little piece of crumpled paper. "Der Silas is a recipe that old Marse Causdon used to use for his hogs when dey got sick, and my Sammy used to use it for his'm too, when we were raising hogs."

"'Tis so old that I could scarcely read it, so I went over and got Mary Liza's gal to write it off for me, and brung it here with me dis morning. It's been many a long day since I seen it used, but it's good. You jest read it and let me har how she is got it down, 'cause des har young things scribble so fast dey don't gib you time to ketch your breath before dey is asking 'what next'; and when dey get it all down, dey can't read it demselves and how dey spect any one else to know beats me."

How eagerly Silas Miller bent down and read that little note. After reading it himself he read it to Aunt Mollie.

"Dat's it, de very stuff. You go and get a big iron pot, and I'll help you get some of it mixed."

Aunt Mollie worked the entire afternoon. Having seen remedies of the best veterinar-

ians failed, Silas seemed to have no doubt about Aunt Mollie's. When she had finished Silas insisted on taking her home in his car.

"No, chile," she said, shaking her head vigorously. "When I gets into one of dem chariots, I wants to go clean home to glory. Dese things sends you up, and den you comes down. No, I shall walk and den I know I shall get dere safe."

"Now Si, you jest feed some of dat stuff to each hog. Den you get down on your knees and git hold of dat wire dat leads from earth to glory and you ring til you gits an answer.

"Si Miller, don't you be like dese har folks dat call themselves de fore hundred. Dey is dat proud dat dey is skeptic. After God has gib dem their health and strength to earn de libbing by the sweat of der brow, den dey has de gall to stand up and say 'Der aint no God.' If dey own Him dey call Him by so many big names, dat you hab to stand and think who dey is talking about."

"Der was old Abe Lincoln. He never got so high up dat he could not git down on his knees. Don't you git too proud to pray, Silas," she said as she walkd slowing toward the gate.

As Aunt Mollie walked along the lonely country road, she prayed and pleaded with God as only a child can plead with his earthly father. "Now, dear Father, I don't ask for myself, but for dat humble chile, Si Miller. Dear Father, you heard me when I prayed in de cotton patches, when my po old back was aching and my feet were blistered. Dear Father, don't forsake me now."

How little did she or Silas suspect that that little slip of paper contained the answer to their prayers.

Not even Aunt Mollie's closest friend, Sister Maria Dudley, could have deemed it possible that Aunt Mollie had gne and worked an entire day without a word of gossip, but with encouraging words so full of faith.

Twelve hours passed, and Silas saw a change that was almost miraculous. He sent word and help to many of the farmers requesting them to pass the good news on to others. Thus, the news that Miller had produced a cure spread like wild-fire. When Mr. Baxter heard it, he came over to see for himself if it was true.

After Silas had shown the farmer the proof, he said, "I must admit that I was a doubting Thomas. Si, we have thought you a wonder for some time, but by golly I do

believe you are a wizard."

"But you are wrong for once, Mr. Baxter, everything I tried failed."

The astonished farmer looked his surprise. "I don't understand you, Si. Here are all of your hogs recovering and all of the farmers that have used the remedy report the same success, and you stand here and say all of your remedies failed."

"Could not some one else produce a cure?"

"Yes, but it seemed that no one did."

"But some one did, and not I."

"Gracious, goodness whom, Si Miller?"

"Aunt Mollie Noble."

"Do you mean Aunt shouting Mollie?"

"The same," replied Si, pleased to see the perplexed look on Mr. Baxter's face.

"When she heard of this disease, she brought me a recipe of an old remedy they used when she was a slave, and stayed all day helping me to get it made."

"Si, do you remember that quotation that Lincoln wrote about the good and bad in us? I guess there is a lot of truth in that saying," said Mr. Baxter, meekly.

A week later, Silas drove to Aunt Mollie's humble shanty. It was a bright, warm April day. The balmy spring air felt refreshing to Silas. The great nerve strain of the past

weeks showed plainly upon him. He seemed to have grown years older, but to-day his face bore that bright, happy look possessed only when the heart is at ease. He found her with work all done, and sitting on a low stool in the doorway with a large family Bible on her lap, with her specks nearly on the end of her nose. She was moving her finger slowly along, half spelling, half reading the passage, "I hear even the sparrow's cry." "How true," she was saying when Silas called, "Good morning, Aunt Mollie."

"Now look here boy, you might night scarer me to death."

"Did you thing I was an angel, Aunt Mollie?"

"Now, Si Miller, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. An angel your color, and nary a wing hab you got."

"You see I am young, and maybe they haven't grown out yet, and as to color, are all angels white, Aunt Mollie?"

Aunt Mollie readjusted her specks, putting them back in the same place, then said, "I often wonder dat myself, Si. If I can jest get in the glory land, I ain't so particular about changing this old color."

"It's genuine isn't it, Aunt Mollie, don't fade or wrinkle."

"You said it, now chile," both laughed heartily.

"We is been so busy talking that I ain't tuk time to say come in, Si."

"No, I thank you, Aunt Mollie. I came over to bring you good news."

"What's dat, honey?"

"Your remedy has proved genuine."

"Oh, praise de Lord."

"And I came to thank you and——"

"Did you thank de Lord, chile?"

"Yes, Aunt Mollie." This time without any of that false pride that he was conscious of before."

"Den chile, don't you bother about a pore old worthless worm like me."

"But, Aunt Mollie, you must take something. If any one else had been able to have done as much, it would have cost a small fortune."

"Now, Si Miller, does you want to hurt my pore old feelings, dose you, Si?"

"Jest think I would take money for helping out in the time of distress! I knew dey don't 'sider me much, but thank de Lord I can do a little kindness."

"But, Aunt Mollie——"

"No, sir, Si, not a cent does this humble servant take."

Silas was about to give up, when he asked, "Maybe there is something that you have been wanting for these many years. See if there is anything that you would like me to give you; I must give you something."

After a few minutes, Aunt Mollie said, "Yes, Silas, there is something that I has been wanting."

"What is it, Aunt Mollie?"

"It is one of dem dar stones dat the kin folks put at de grave of their loved ones when dey die, but dey is so 'sensitive, and I have always wanted one for Sammy. I has managed to put by a little against it, but am nowhere nigh it yet."

"Oh! Aunt Mollie, you mean a tombstone."

"Is dat what dey call dem? I have plumb forgot the name."

"Well, you go and have one made, just the kind you want, and then let them send me the bill."

"But, Si, they are powerfully high."

Then thinking that she would not have as nice a one as he wanted her to have, Silas changed his mind, and asked her what she wanted on it.

"I want Sammy's age, death and his discharge from the Civil War."

"All right, Aunt Mollie, you shall have it."

Large drops of tears stood in her eyes as she tried to thank Silas for his noble gift.

"Now, chile, I shall not forget you as long as I live, and I don't calculate dat is long, for I am getting old."

"Yes, Aunt Mollie, your is the evening of life."

"Dat's right, honey, and den comes de night, wid it de rest."

"Eternal rest, Aunt Mollie."

As Silas drove homeward that day, he realized that it is not ours to pass judgment upon our fellow man. While Aunt Mollie still bore the name of a gossip, there was one who knew it was only a weakness, and in her heart she carried a debt of charitableness that could not be fathomed by human minds.

Some weeks later when the young minister shook hands with Aunt Mollie saying, "There is more in you than shouting and praying," she shook her head and said, "A-ah, Lord, chile," a favorite expression which she used when she did not want to say out right, "Not all old folks are fools."

She was indeed rewarded when a few months later she went to the cemetery and

saw the beautiful tomb-stone Silas had erected at her beloved husband's grave. In expressing her delight she exclaimed, "the Lord bless Silas Miller—and won't de folks be envious when dey sees dis beautiful stone. Why it's taller than any out here," she mused as she looked around as far as her dim eyes could behold. Then she unwrapped a small bundle that she had brought with her and displayed a beautiful silk American flag, which she proudly wrapped about the stone.

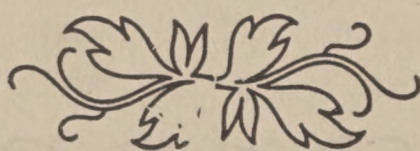
It was sometime before Silas could grasp the same working spirit as he hitherto had possessed. He said, "It was like climbing a mighty mountain, when about half way up, to find oneself suddenly plunged to the very bottom, to begin all over again.

Silas Miller's courage had nearly failed him, his faith was shaking, but he had withstood the test. It had made him less arrogant, more sympathetic, more patient with others that had failed, and had not the courage to go on, more considerate of the less fortunate. In fact, this calamity was a hidden blessing.

Some months later, we see him preparing for the sale that made for him the name that

he bore forever afterwards, "The Hog King of the States."





CHAPTER X.

TWO GREAT EVENTS

It was a beautiful day on the twentieth of June, the sun was peeping behind the Eastern horizon. Already many vehicles were coming in from every direction over the different country roads. If one could ask where they were going, they would be told that they were going to the wonderful sale at Miller's. For weeks, hundreds of persons, especially farmers, had looked forward to this day. It had been extensively advertised in every paper and magazine throughout the country. Already, hundreds of letters had arrived. The work was heavy, Silas and his hired men were kept busy. "I do not know what I shall do," said Silas to a friend, "I must get a girl more capable to take full charge of the heavy mail orders." He had kept up a continuous correspondence with Margaret and wrote and asked her if her parents could arrange to let her come down for a week to help him superintend the work in the office during the week of the sale. "You see, I am just now accepting

the offer of assistance you made me, some time ago. Your help to me at this time will be invaluable. My father and mother will do all they can to make it pleasant for you. If you cannot come, I shall suffer a great loss through mail orders."

When Margaret read this letter, and had gotten the consent of her parents to go, no one knew it, but it was the happiest moment of her life. Silas Miller was the prince of her heart. A few days later, Margaret Kempt sat in Silas Miller's office, and worked with lightning speed on the typewriter. Everyone marveled at the rapidity of speed she possessed. Letter after letter was read and answered. She placed everything in order, making it easier for the men to get the orders filled. She had done business for her father but nothing like this. She was pleased when Silas praised her at the end of a day. He told her that she had done more work in one day than they had been able to get out in a week. They stopped work at five o'clock each day, then went for a little recreation; Silas was teaching her to ride horseback, and there was nothing Margaret liked better than to ride along the country road and watch the beautiful Southern sunset.

All was in readiness; the farm was a picturesque place: all over the fields were pens and stalls with the names of the different breeds of hogs that were enclosed.

Never in all of his life was Silas so excited; he had spent hundreds of dollars in advertisements and improvements to make this a great day. Long before ten o'clock he had taken in more money and sold more hogs than he had during his entire years of business. By noon that day, more than five thousand persons had visited the farm. When they stopped at five o'clock, every hog had been sold, and every order filled. The farmers who lived in that vicinity said they had never seen such a sale; and every thing so well arranged. There was no auction; everything was sold in lots and pairs at set prices.

Mr. Baxter shook his head at some of the farmers and said, "Ain't Miller coming, though? Yes, I tell you, in another year or so, he will be a wealthy man."

During the entire day many comments were heard amongst the white farmers. Some wanted to know how he got his start; others marveled at the excellent business way in which he had arranged his sale, and still others doubted that he was doing busi-

ness for himself.

Mr. Baxter was proud to say that Silas worked for him when a boy, always adding, "And a finer boy, I never saw."

A few days later, Silas was astonished to get a letter from Mr. Walker; it was a letter full of praise and encouragement. He told Silas of having seen the advertisement in his home paper, and he also said Mr. Baxter had told him of the great sale he had had. "I am as proud as you are, Silas," he said; and ended by saying, "Now, Silas, I am going to give you the advice I have given to hundreds of my young men—you have gotten a start; get married while you are young. Do not wait until you are old, or until you have accumulated more wealth; but now, while you are young and can become adapted to each other's ways; then bring into the world strong, healthy children. I have only one, but she is more precious to me than the millions of dollars I have made."

After reading this letter, Silas thought for a while. It was indeed true that success seemed his; each year he grew more prosperous; yet, there seemed to be something amiss. He had met many girls, but the great character of Love had lain—undisturbed.

That afternoon, as Margaret and Silas went for their daily ride, he told her of his plans to buy a larger place—it contained nearly twelve hundred acres. Margaret listened attentively; she was always interested in anything that Silas said or did. “I am going to let father and mother have the place where we are now,” said Silas. “Shall we drive around to see the new place?” “O, yes,” answered Margaret, clapping her hands in childish glee.

It was a beautiful tract of land, situated upon a hill that sloped down toward the main road. Silas pointed out the different improvements that could be made to beautify the place. Beyond the orchard, in back of the house, a beautiful stream meandered through one side of the farm to a small creek at the edge of a pine forest. Margaret stood looking.

“Isn’t it beautiful?” she exclaimed.

“Do you really like it, Margaret?”

“Oh, I think it is just grand, and just think, Silas, you have made enough money to buy it.”

“And pay cash for it, too, Margaret,” continued Silas.

Her large, dark eyes shone with happiness as she said, “I am so glad you have made

good, I am——we are all so proud of you, Silas.”

“Are you, Margaret?” he said, looking at her with his deep, frank eyes. “If you are, will you share it with me, Margaret? You were a real friend to me when I was a lonely, shabby, country boy; you took me to church with you that Easter Sunday morning when no other living soul would dare to. That day you became one of the dearest friends that I had, and now, when I called upon you to come and help me, you came. Who could have filled your place? If you did so much to make me happy then, I know that your faithfulness need not be questioned, now. I did not know until you came last week that I really loved you, Margaret; it is sometime hard to differentiate between love and friendship. In my case, it is both. I know no other woman I would want for a wife and the mother of my children. I am not offering you wealth or position; you have both. But come and share what you have helped me to make.”

Margaret had learned to love Silas, but she dared not hope this. We do not know just what Margaret answered, but, when they returned to the house, she was Silas Miller's promised wife.

At the end of the week, when Margaret left for home, Silas told her to tell her parents that he was coming to them again for advice.

Nett and her classmates were preparing for Commencement on the twenty-eighth of June. It had been three years of hard work. Soon, they were to say good-bye to the Hospital where they had learned, by theory and fact, the science of Nursing.

In these years, many of the girls learned that nursing was one of the greatest professions that any woman could follow.

To look down upon a sick person and be able to know what to give or to do to relieve suffering, was, to Nett, a wonderful knowledge.

Others who had chosen this course to please some parent or guardian or to keep from working in the kitchen had been firmly convinced that it was a stepping-stone from hard work to harder work. Yet, as Commencement day drew nearer, they all looked forward to it with much pride. Nett was as happy and gay as any, but a little quiet and more reserved. She had worked hard and had hoped to receive class honors, but she knew that any girl who had been demerited or punished could not have such dis-

inction conferred upon her. She seemed to feel this keener as the time for graduation drew near. Several prominent speakers had been chosen for the evening. Miss Dunn was Valedictorian of the class. Nett was much surprised when Miss Wolf asked her to prepare a short talk on "The Duties of a Nurse." She explained to Nett that the girl assigned that part seemed too nervous to face the audience. Nett was delighted to substitute and went to work to prepare the essay.

Silas had sent her a check and a long letter telling her how proud they all were. He told her that he could not attend the Graduating exercise, but would be in the city on the first of the month. "I want to take you to see Margaret Kempt, my promised wife!" He also told her how Margaret had come and helped him during the week of the sale. "She is the second most unselfish girl that I have ever known; you are the first, Nett. I cannot wait until you are dead, I must give you the roses now. You are the dearest little sister that a brother could have!"

As she read this letter her heart burned with joy, to know that her brother had not forgotten the efforts she had made to help him.

At eight-thirty o'clock, on the evening of the twenty-eighth day of June, fourteen girls—dressed in white, representing the emblem of purity—marched on to the platform to the strains of the orchestra's music.

The overcrowded assembly room greeted them with a series of loud applause. One girl thought that she had not a relative or friend present; she did not know that in that audience a young girl looked anxiously into the face of every graduate. At last, she turned to an elderly lady and gentleman sitting beside her and said, "O, mother, and look, father, that is Nett; just like Silas, isn't she?"

"Yes, there can be no mistake, she bears a striking resemblance to Silas!" said her father.

"Isn't she a dear? What a fine, composed face; one can see the goodness shining through her eyes!" said Mrs. Kempt.

The girls were seated. Speaker after speaker paid worthy tribute to the young women who had prepared themselves to minister to suffering humanity. The house rang again and again with applause throughout the entire program.

Upon the platform with the other speakers a young man sat, buried deep in thought.

He seemed to pay little or no attention to what was being said by the other speakers. He looked now and then at the girls. His eyes seemed to rest long upon Nett; then he seemed to come to a decided conclusion. At last, the master of ceremonies introduced him to the audience as the last speaker of the evening, and as being one who had served in the same hospital. He had seen every girl at her best and knew the character and disposition of each.

Dr. Lionel walked slowly to the centre of the platform; his deep, clear, concise voice soon gave him the full attention of the entire audience. He talked from the subject, "Working Through!" He emphasized the value of a good nurse. Every few minutes the audience broke forth into thunderous applause; then he said, "I have a story to tell of a nurse in a certain hospital. One day one of the strictest rules of the hospital was broken by some of the nurses; no one would admit the deed but the blame was placed upon one—for what purpose it was not generally known. The accused girl frankly admitted that she did not commit the act charged against her, but said she could take the punishment and thereby save the girl who would not admit her own guilt.

“That nurse had to do double duty for the whole week. During the first night, one of the doctors went purposely to see how she was accepting the unjust punishment. Instead of finding her sulking and pouting on duty, as he had suspected, he found her cheerfully working amongst the patients—surrounded by a halo that hardly belonged to an earthly being. She had forgotten that she was being punished for another’s deed. The doctor knew who had done the deed and why the blame was put on this certain nurse.” Dr. Lionel again referred to the work and then said, “The doctor will never forget that nurse and that noble act.”

The audience sat spell-bound during the recital; one could have heard the slightest whisper; each individual seemed to be trying to grasp each word as they came from the lips of the speaker. Dr. Lionel came to a conclusion by saying, “She who can do this has already fitted herself for this great work, and—and”—his strong voice quivered—“I am proud to say that that girl stands here amongst these fourteen, to-night; by name—Miss Nett Mliler!” Then he fairly pushed Nett to the middle of the platform.

Did the audience hear aright? There was silence; then there rose such an applause

that nearly sent the roof from the building. Many stood to get a glimpse of the little woman.

Nett could barely restrain the tears from falling as she delivered her essay, which was short and simple, but very impressive.

As she was leaving the assembly hall, Lucy Dunn came to her and said, "Nett Miller, can you ever forgive me? I did not mean to let you bear the blame and take the punishment for my wrong-doing; but, when we were discussing whom to tell, or what to say about the matter, one of the girls said, 'You should worry; say that little, pumpkin-head greenhorn from the country did it; they will not punish her half as hard as one of us who is not so pious as she. You know they're all daffy about her; but what they see in her, heaven only knows.' Thinking they were only joking, I said 'all right,' but did not think for once that the girl was going to say you did it when the Superintendent asked about it the following morning; and I was such a coward that I would not even own it after your emphatic denial. Each day I thought to confess, but as time passed, it grew hard to broach the subject; so I let it remain as it was; but, Nett, I have suffered more than you have. No punish-

ment they could have given me would have brought so many tears and such heartaches as did your noble act; and not a harsh word to any of us did you say. I am so sorry that I have been so narrow-minded; I do not ask you to forget it, that you cannot do, but can you forgive me?"

Nett put her arms around her and said, "Dear Lucy, I can both forgive and forget; don't think of it, life is too short to worry over the past. Sometimes such things are good for us all; one heart has been tested; another purged. That little incident, I'm sure, will make you more careful in the future. Lucy, we are soon to leave this hospital; maybe, forever--where we have studied and worked together for three years. Our paths may lead through different avenues, but we may meet again; let us part true friends."

"But, Nett, everyone will hate me."

"No, Lucy, remember Dr. Lionel did not call any names; he did not even tell who it was. You can be sure he will not say any more than he has already said."

The two girls shook hands and parted.

Nett had been so busy talking and receiving congratulations that she had not stopped

to look at the several presents that she had received: From Mr. and Mrs. Kempt, a leather medicine case; a bouquet of flowers from Margaret; and a medical thermometer from Dr. Lionel. Nett was overjoyed. "Just thinkn, these from Mr. and Mrs. Kempt and Margaret, friends whom I have never seen; and so thoughtful of Dr. Lionel to have remembered me with so useful a gift."

Nett Miller left the assembly that evening with part of her ambition obtained—a graduated nurse, with her diploma, to start a few days hence in the broad field of her calling amongst the sick and suffering.

Nett had sent several invitations to the folks at home; as none could attend the exercises, Silas mailed them to Margaret and her parents, asking them to go to the graduation of they possibly could. Margaret had talked her parents "deaf, dumb and blind" as they expressed it, until they consented to accompany her.

Silas came to the city on the first day of July. He was glad to see his sister; she was so happy, but a little tired. In showing him the beautiful present that Mr. and Mrs. Kemtp had given her, she said, "I could not imagine from whom they came until I saw the name; I was in ecstasy when I saw that

your friends had remembered me!"

"Yes, Nett, I have made few friends in life, but good ones."

They had luncheon together; then he took her to meet the Kempts. It was a joyous meeting; Margaret had heard of Nett, and Nett of Margaret, until they felt that they had known each other for years. There seemed to be no disappointment in the meeting. Nett felt herself at home in the palatial home of the Kempts. They invited her to stay a week with them.

The day had been hot and sultry; during the evening, Mr. Kempt suggested that the girls go for ice cream.

Silas took advantage of their absence to tell Mr. and Mrs. Kempt the purpose of his visit. "Mr. Kempt, a few years ago I came to you for advice; you gave it to me; I followed it and benefited by it. To-day I have come to you again for advice."

"Well, Silas, what is it? Whatever it is, I shall do my best to assist you in whatever way I can."

"I have come to ask your advice and consent in marrying your daughter."

Mr. Kempt was silent; he was not surprised, for he had seen for some time that there was something more binding than a

mere friendship between Margaret and Silas. He turned to his wife and said, "Mother?"

"For our Margaret?" she queried.

"Yes, Mrs. Kempt, I know that she is your all and it will be hard for you to part with her, but it will be harder for me to live without her; I promise nothing, but let me prove to you what I shall be. I am not offering her money or position, but a life that I am not ashamed of."

His last statement went directly to the hearts of the elderly couple. Mr. Kempt said, "Silas, I could not say what you have said when I asked permission to marry my wife. The life you have lived makes you eligible to marry any good woman. Our men of to-day do not think of preparing themselves to become good husbands and fathers; but live a life so full of vice and so corrupt until, at the earliest marriageable age they can only offer a girl a sickly, weak, diseased body. We shall hate to part with her, but are proud to know that the man whom she has chosen is a good man. We only hope that she will prove to be a true wife and a good mother."

Mrs. Kempt gave her consent. Like all mothers, she did not say much. To her,

Margaret still seemed only a baby.

When the girls returned, Mr. Kempt kissed his daughter and told her that they had given their consent for her to marry the best man alive. "I know you think so, don't you, dear?" he asked, patting her on the head.

"Margaret, do you wish to leave father and me?" asked her mother a little sadly.

"Yes, mother, I love you and father dearly, but there is something that makes me want to leave you for this man; I don't know what it is, but it is something."

"Yes, dear; we understand," said her father, "don't we, mother?"

Mr. Kempt was not like most parents who think it a disgrace to own that they ever were in love, or still loved each other.

"Nett, you must come and be our daughter; you know we shall be very lonely when Margaret leaves us."

"Dear Mrs. Kempt, I shall come as often as it is possible; I shall begin my work soon and will not have much time for visiting or pleasure, but I thank you so much for your kindness, said Nett.

That week was a pleasant one for Nett. Ere she will have spent another week of such happiness, Nett Miller will have paid the

price: Angels pay to be angels.

Margaret's engagement was announced at an informal dinner given by her parents. News spread far and wide. In every home of the social set the coming marriage of Margaret Kempt to Silas Miller, the young Southern farmer, was much discussed. Few of Margaret's friends had met Silas and knew little or nothing about him.

Mrs. Crumpton, one of the leading matrons of the four-hundred set, said, "I cannot see where Attorney Kempt's senses are to marry his daughter off to such a person. Of course no one would dare broach the subject to him; he would explode like a keg of gunpowder."

"No," said Mrs. Townsend, "when Henry Kempt sets his mind on anything and thinks that thing is right, there is no turning him around. I suppose the man is some fortune hunter, marrying Margaret for her money and she is so heels-over-head in love with him that she can't see it."

"Well, I do hope she'll keep him in the country and not bring him up North and try to push him into our set."

"That's one thing I must say about the Kempts; they don't do any pushing; everybody I know is too glad to have them for

associates, and, if there is any pushing done, the other party generally does it," said Mrs. Townsend, conclusively.

When Aunt Mollie Noble heard of Silas' engagement she sat down and folded her arms and said, "Dar now; what did I tell you sis Mariah? Gone clean up to the city to marry somebody—'taint none ob de gals 'roun' heah good 'nuf fo' him. Done made a little money now, an' his head is dat swell dat he mus' marry some city 'oman; well, who eber she is, if she comes from de city, 'twont take her long to help him spend it."

"Yo' sure don said a mouf full, now Aunt Mollie; and besides, dey say it is dat girl dat he had come down heah to help him during the wek ob dat big sale dey hab hyeah."

Aunt Mollie stood up; kimbowing herself, said, "Yo' doan mean to tell me dat Silas Miller is goin' to marry dat little stripplin' of a peanut?"

"Dat's jes' what I hears, Aunt Mollie."

"Well, sah, I'se nevah heard of sich a foolish thing in all my life; why Sis Mariah, she's dat brazen, an' I seed her wid mah own eyes ridin' horseback 'roun' here 'straddle, jes' lak a man; an' when I speaks to brother Miller about it, he says, dat's de

way dey rides in de city. Sez I, 'it may be city style, but it ain't no way fo' no decent 'oman to ride.' An' she's dat little dat she won't be able to lif' a pot from de stove. Who do yo s'pose do all de cookin' fo' de hands? Guess he'll be dunce 'nuf to try to do it hisself."

✓ "No, dey say he's goin' to hire a cook."

"Hursh, Sis' Mariah, I done heard so much foolishness dat I'll had de heart trubble de res' ob dis week. Jes' t'ink ob his ma and pa working all dese years an' he astrutin' off to de city to marry some S'iety 'oman an' den hirin' a cook fo' her."

"I am a little 'fraid dat he will fin' dat she is not much fitted fo' dis life; de only t'ing, we'll wait an' see how she gets along," said Sis' Mariah.

"I s'pose he ca'culates on us po' ole work-in' folks turnin' out an' helpin' her to cook an' keep house; but I fo' one, don't tend to move one step from dis hyear shanty, cayse ain't nobody goin' t' hire us any cooks when we gits too ole to work," assured Aunt Mollie.

"As I 'foresaid, Aunt Mollie, let us wait an' see how she gits along."

THE WEDDING

On the twenty-fourth day of October, two persons awoke to remember it was their wedding day. It was a typical autumn day; Jack Frost had made his appearance a few nights before, making the air keen and crisp; the leaves were falling and everywhere Nature seemed to be unrobing herself for the coming winter.

In a beautiful home in a northern city, a young girl lay restlessly counting the passing hours; she had slept but little during the night and, at the first peep of dawn, she awoke and went to the room of her parents—tapping lightly on the door, at the same time asking if they were awake. “No, dear, you awoke us, come in.”

“Have you been up all night?”

“No, papa, but I didn’t sleep much.”

“I didn’t either, a certain night about thirty years ago, but nothing disturbs me now,” said Mr. Kempt laughingly.

“And mother, are you awake, too?” she asked.

“Yes, dear.”

Neither the father nor the daughter knew that during the entire night the mother had secretly wiped the tears away, as the

thought dawned upon her that, before another sunrise, her daughter would belong to another.

In the South, on the farm, a father walked nervously up and down the yard. He repeatedly asked his son, "Are you sure, Si, that Margaret will be contented to live here? You know that a week's visit in the country is far different from a life-time stay. I am afraid that she will soon tire of this dull, monotonous country life." Silas reassured his father not to worry; he told him that if Margaret had consented to come, she will have made up her mind to accept things as they were. "She is the kind that can readily adapt herself to anything—provided that thing is right."

A few hours later Silas left for the city on the early train. He recalled his first trip to Philadelphia—how differently! Then, a poor, penniless boy, with only hope and ambition before him; today, a man of considerable wealth, with some of those hopes realized and new ones formulating.

When he changed trains and boarded a north-bound express, several white persons recognized him and said to their friends who sat with them, "That's Miller." "Yes, I see it is; a fine-looking fellow, and they say he's

getting rich quick." "Well, I don't know about the quickness, but if he keeps on at the rate he is going, there will not be a white man in the State richer than he."

"Who is Miller, papa?" asked a little boy sitting beside his father, who was one of the men of the group.. "He is the little colored boy you have often heard Mr. Baxter speak of and tell how he worked his way from a penniless boy to a prosperous business man."

While they talked, Silas was thinking of the future, and what it would mean to him. If it will only be as well as the past, I shall not complain," he soliloquized.

About six o'clock that evening a number of their intimate friends gathered in the parlor of Attorney and Mrs. Kempt to witness the marriage of their daughter.

Much comment could be heard while the guests waited anxiously for the hour. As the clock was striking six, the bridal party marched in the drawing room; and when Silas Miller entered, accompanied by the best man, who was a cousin of the bride, not another word was heard. Everyone gazed with astonished admiration at the tall, erect figure of the well-groomed and composed-looking young man. Many of the

girls who sat there would willingly have taken Margaret's place, and they were not too selfish to tell her so.

Thus two girls changed places: Margaret Kempt, a city-bred girl, left behind her the fascinating scenes of a large city for the quiet life of the country; and Nett Miller gave up the fields, the flowers, the song birds, and the rural social life to work for suffering humanity in the hot, dusty, noisy city.

News was spread that Silas would return Saturday evening and would visit the church the following morning with his bride. Many invitations had been issued, asking all the neighboring friends to a housewarming party, Wednesday evening.

When Aunt Mollie got her invitation to the affair she took it to the home of a neighbor to see what it contained.

"A hous' warmin' pahty!" she exclaimed. "I'se nevah hyeahed of sich befo' in mah life, an' Ah am nigh on to de sixties. Ah tells yo', Ida, des' hyeah young peepl' don't know what to git at; a 'vitin' company to warm up de hous! Now, when we got married, we jes' put up a stove an' put some wood in thar. When de stove got hot, it hetted up de hous' an' de only envitation youse got

war to wahm up on de wood pile by heppin' to cut up some ob de wood. Yes'm, dats de truth, dis is funny notions dey is got."

"Ain't you goin' Aunt Mollie?" asked Miss Long.

"Yo' bet I doan miss it," she said.

Sunday morning, Aunt Mollie got up early. She almost forgot to feed the chickens and had to go back to get her snuff box and see if she had locked the door after she had started for church.

By hurrying so fast, she was almost breathless when she reached the church. Seeing Sister Maria Dudley she leaned over the pew and asked, "Has dey come yet?"

"Has who come, Aunt Mollie?"

"De bride an' groom. An' did yo' git an envitation to de pahty?"

"Yes, I did git some kind of letter, but I didn't jes' un'erstan' what it meant."

"An' nobody else. Ah guess its jest some ob dese hyeah high flutin' notions dat dese city folks am got, an' a waste of lots ob money; but, ah gess ah'll go jest de same to see what it is lak. Ain't yo' goin,' Sis Mariah?"

"Yes, I t'ink all is goin' dat got envited."

The minister had just finished reading the Scripture, and the choir was singing

when Silas entered with his bride. There was a general "Um-m" throughout the congregation.

Aunt Mollie never knew what was said or done after she found that they had arrived. Touching Sis Maria lightly on the shoulder, she whispered, "She looks mighty puny to me, an' I declar' she ain't much bigger den a kildee. I 'spec' he'll wish mo' den once dat he had married some good, strong, country-fed gal."

"Now, don't over-ca'culate de t'ing, Aunt Mollie; I t'ink she'll be all right when she's hyeah a while," said Sis' Maria.

"Maybe so, but thars no telling."

After the service, Silas introduced Margaret to all, and in spite of all that she had said, Aunt Mollie said afterward, "A sweeter little o'man Ah hab neveh met in all ob mah life."

At the party, Margaret won many friends, and ere she had been in that community long she was beloved by all. This made Silas proud of the woman he had chosen for a wife.

Mr. Miller said, "I have never seen such a girl; a splendid housekeeper, and a good manager. I do not think that Silas could have found a better girl even if she had been

reared in the country.”

While Silas prospered each year, he did not forget the humble folks with whom he was reared; both he and Margaret took active part in all the events for social uplift and beneficial affairs. The people soon found that Margaret was more proficient in dealing with the problems that concerned the welfare of the community than they, and willingly gave these matters into her hands. Margaret soon grew to love these quaint and humble folks and they in return respected and honored her.

Silas was elected president of a club for young men; and through his efforts many received help to start in business. He never forgot his boyhood days.

In this new life, his happiness was inexpressible. With Margaret, his first and only love, and his home. Nothing he enjoyed now as much as the quiet evenings with her by his side.

TEN YEARS LATER

Ten years has passed, Silas Miller is now said to be the wealthiest colored man in the State, and is reputed to be worth almost a

million dollars. His name has reached every State in the Union and foreign papers refer to him as the Hog King of the States.

During this time, four sons had been born to this union. It seemed that God had almost granted Margaret her wish. Never was there a more faithful wife nor a better mother. Both Silas and Margaret loved these sturdy little fellows, but, of course, they were left a great deal with their mother—Silas being busy most of the time.

One day when little Kempt was coaxing him to play ball, Silas said in a very impatient tone, "Don't worry father, I am busy. Go play with your brothers," pushing the little fellow almost roughly aside. Margaret had seen the incident from a window that overlooked the broad lawn; her heart almost sank within her when she heard the child say to his brother, "Papa's so mean, I almost hate him."

"This will never do; I must speak to Silas about that to-night," said Margaret to herself.

That night when the children were fast asleep, Margaret and Silas were sitting together in the library; she said, "Silas, dear little Kempt was very much hurt when you would not play ball with him this afternoon."

"But, Margaret, you don't know how much I have to do and think about; I have no time to be bothered playing ball. Why can't they play together? I give them everything that youngsters need to make them happy. I am planning to buy Kempt a pony and cart for his birthday; I am willing to give them anything that money can buy."

"And withhold from them the thing that they crave most," said Margaret more reprovingly than he had ever heard her speak.

"Margaret, you talk so foolish; what on earth do I keep from them?"

"A father's love."

Silas looked astonished. "Oh, Margaret, how can you say that?"

"It is hard, Silas, but it is true; I heard little Kempt say to-day that you were mean and he hated you. Silas, I would die if our children grew to dislike you—the only man in the world to me. The child wanted you to play ball with him; you are always too busy. You love them, I know, but if you do not devote a little time to amuse them, the children and you will grow up as strangers; they are too young to understand. I did not awaken to this fact myself, until I heard Kempt's remark to-day."

Silas sat listening—ashen and pale—un-

shed tears stood in his eyes.

"Oh, Margaret!"

"Yes, God has given them to us; they are what we wished and hoped for. But if you thrust them aside now to make money and lose their love, what joy will you get out of it? If you want their love and respect when they are grown men, and you and I are old, give them a little of your time during their play hours; this is a child's idea of love. It will be worth more than the million that you have made, or the millions that you may make."

Silas went over to Margaret; putting his arms around her, he said, "Mother, you are right; don't let me make such a blunder; what would I ever do without you? You have always been my guiding star." He fondled and kissed her. She smiled happily.

After that Silas devoted a few hours each day to his children. He was amazed to see how differently they regarded him; they always looked forward to the hours when "papa" would play with them. Silas began to feel a closer tie than ever before. He realized that they had almost been strangers. One day, after their usual romp, little Kempt came into the house for some cookies. "And some for papa, too, mother," he

said, dancing around in a great hurry.

“Why are you in such a hurry? What have you been doing, you are so warm from running?”

“We have been playing ‘Tiger’ with papa and, O, mother, the fun! Papa is just great, isn’t he, mother? Come on and watch us,” With this invitation, he raced out of the kitchen as fast as his little legs could carry him.

It made the mother very happy to see the children and their father playing together and she said, “Thank God, the gulf was bridged before it was too late.”



CHAPTER XI.

LET ME BUILD MY HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AND BE A FRIEND TO MAN

During the intervening years Nett worked in the hospital. After four years of faithful work she was promoted to the office of Superintendent. In this position she was loved and esteemed by all. She had seen so much suffering that she often wondered if the Heavenly Father was really merciful. She held the position of Superintendent for two years, then came time for her to go out into wider fields.

One day there was a meeting of the doctors at the hospital in reference to securing nurses for community and slum district work. A few days later, all of the nurses were summoned to meet in the assembly hall and the proposition was placed before them.

Calling the meeting to order the speaker addressed them, saying, "Dear friends, we are gathered here for a very important pur-

pose; that purpose is to secure two efficient, trained nurses from this hospital to work amongst the poor, unfortunate class of our people in this city. You realize with us the extent of the influx of our people to this city yearly; they live here in congested districts under the most unsanitary conditions and not being used to this life, many have become ill and are dying for the want of good attention. We doctors do our best, but the chief want among them is god ursing. We all have at some time or other, migrated here from different parts; if we didn't our parents did. If we let these poor people go unnoticed and in want, whom shall they look to for succor? Not to the white people, by no means; they have their own poor to help, and we must help ours. We want nurses to volunteer to help. Of course, it must be understood that this club is securing these nurses and shall not be able to pay them the full fee. We can only promise twelve dollars per week, and whatever some of the people are able to pay. It must be a sacrifice on the part of the ones who volunteer."

The speaker, Dr. Waftner, talked a few minutes longer. He told of how he had given his services to many of them, free of charge; then he asked if there were two who

would volunteer to go.

There was silence, then Nurse Miller arose and volunteered her services by saying, "I will go." Miss Dunn also volunteered.

The entire staff objected to Nett resigning her position to work in the charity field.

"It is a broad field; they need me, and maybe I need them," she said in reply to many protests.

There was one who would have said much rather than see this young woman, of whom he had grown so fond, leave the position which she so worthily filled to go to work in the slum district. But when he heard her say "They need me," it filled his heart to know that she was so unselfish; and he knew it would make him seem almost inhuman in her sight if he openly objected.

After resigning her position, Nett rented a small room with a quiet, respectable family. Within these walls and at her work she spent a greater part of ten years. She worked unceasingly in and out amongst the poorest of the poor; up and down long flights of dirty, ill-smelling stairs, and into alleys and courts where it seemed almost impossible for humanity to exist.

She scrubbed floors, washed soiled bedding, cooked nourishing food, washed and

dressed little, neglected children. How precious they all were to her! She never tired of her work. She taught these innocent mothers the art of cleanliness and how to protect their children from many minor diseases. Nett made herself one of them. She eliminated that stiff, professional air—so prevalent amongst some doctors and nurses.

She worked hard from early morn until late at night. Hopeless as it seemed at first, they gradually grasped the true meaning of what she tried to teach them. Her efforts were not fruitless; she was indeed a happy woman when she saw them slowly awakening and the rays of the sun of Thriftness began to pierce the awful gloom.

They had learned to love her; many of the sick would lay and count the hours until she would return and they knew her very footsteps. She had made many sacrifices to make them comfortable and it was wonderful to see how these poor people would save a dollar here, or fifty cents there, and sometimes she would be surprised to be handed an envelope with five dollars in it from some husband or father, in appreciation of her work. Nett would not hurt their pride by refusing to accept it. She listened

to various stories of misfortune and hardship; she soothed many an aching heart and pillowed many a dying head on her bosom.

While merry throngs of young people crowded the dance halls, theatres, parks and the saeshore in their respective seasons, and were being invited here and there to parties and luncheons, Nett Miller worked on—not that she was any less human than any of the other girls, but her work must be done.

Several young men had called, but after a few visits they came to the conclusion that she was too slow. She was dumbfounded to be frankly told by one young man that “you try to be different from the other girls; there was once a time when women preserved themselves for marriage, but that day is passed now,” he said. Nett bowed her head and said, “I have my own ideas of life; let each one live his or her own way.”

At first she had thought a great deal of this young man, but she knew that a man who would consider a good woman of so little value would not make a suitable companion for any woman. Tears came into her eyes as she watched him slowly descend the stairs. “How could a young man so well educated (he having graduated from one of the best colleges of the country)

“speak so?” Then she pitied him. “No one has taught him; he does not know any better, and he is not broad-minded enough to know the better woman,” she said.

Nett was called one night to the bedside of a very sick girl. She had just fixed the patient comfortably and was about to leave the room when she was startled to hear the feeble voice of the patient call her by her first name; she turned quickly and went back to the bed.

“Nett, Nett, don’t you know me?”

“No, I’m afraid not.”

“Make a brighter light.”

Nett did so and was very much astonished to look down upon the emaciated countenance of Anna Gould—her former class-mate at ——— Hospital.

“Anna!” she exclaimed.

“Yes, it is Anna.”

“What on earth are you doing here, and so sick?”

“I’m dying!”

“O, Anna!”

“Yes, Nett, I’m dying—that is the reason I sent for you to-night.”

Here spasms of coughing seized her, after which she was almost too weak to talk. Nett begged her to rest and not talk.

"No, I cannot rest—there is no rest for me until after to-morrow." A shadow of distress clouded her thin face. "Close the door and sit down beside me and hear my story."

"I left the hospital disgusted with nursing. I would never have finished the course had it not been for my mother who was so anxious to see me do something besides house work. I was considered a beautiful girl and thought of nothing but dress and good times. To dress well, I must have money and I had made up my mind not to work hard for it. With my acclaimed beauty I was quite an attraction among the men. I soon realized the extent of my influence and it mattered not to me whether they were married or single men, as long as they spent the money." Here she paused a while to get her breath. "I drifted from one man to another—not men of low class, but the best and most successful of our men. O, the life that I have lived! If some of those men would have said one word to induce me to do better I would not be here to-day. Look at this wasted form, the pain and agony I am enduring—all this for a few gaudy, perishable clothes—my beauty, my youth and womanhood all sacrificed and they are in their comfortable homes around the firesides

with their wives and children; I am here alone, forgotten and dying."

She put her hands over her face as if to ward off a terrible scene. "And, Nett, the worst of all is the wrong I have done my mother. Thank God! She doesn't know. I have lied to her; told her that I was working at my profession and sent her money. Once she came here to see me; I was ashamed of her and told my acquaintances that she was my foster-mother. I had forgotten that she had washed and ironed, day and night, to keep me in training school and clothed me until I had finished, I soon hurried her back home—telling her that I had other appointments and did not want her to be alone. To-day I long for that home and that mother. If she know, she would be the only one to forgive me; but she cannot, she must not know—it would kill her.

"Take this message to other girls, Nett, and show them the fruits of disobedience and sin."

The tears streamed down Nett's face as she listened to this sad story. She looked at the once beautiful face, now marred by sin and distorted by suffering; placing her hand on the damp forehead, where there already lurked the hectic bloom of death, she

said: "Anna, don't give up—while there is life there is hope."

"No, Nett, no, not for me."

"Through such avenues, Anna, God has wrought many wonderful things."

Nett racked her brain to think of something more to say to cheer the dying girl. She referred to many adverse conditions in the lives of different people who eventually benefited as a result of the adversity; such as slavery and hardship endured by the early Christians that Christianity might be established permanently.

She ended by saying, "Anna, you are sending a greater message to our girls to-day on your dying bed than I could have given in all the years of my life. God's works are so mysterious that we cannot fathom them. He, no doubt, has suffered you to come to this that thousands of other girls might avoid this path, and, if so, you shall not have died in vain."

"Do you really think so, Nett?"

"Yes, dear girl, I do."

A quiet calm settled upon the face. "I feel so much better, now, but I am very tired—tired of this world that was once so wonderful to me. Let me rest."

Nett arranged the pillows comfortably

around her and turned the light low. Anna slept the entire night, waking only when seized by a coughing spell.

The next morning as the sun's bright rays shone into the room Anna said: "Isn't it beautiful? But it is the last sun that shall ever rise for me."

Towards the latter part of the afternoon she called Nett and told her that she had an endowment for five hundred dollars insurance. "I want you to see that these humble, but good people get one hundred dollars for their kindness to me. What is left over the expenses goes to my mother."

Then she asked Nett to get a little jewelry box out of the top chiffonier drawer. Anna opened the box, took out a beautiful diamond ring and gave it to Nett. She said, "I know you don't want this, but grant my dying wish by accepting it."

Nett sighed as though pained at the thought of the approaching death. "Very well, dear, I shall keep it in memory of you, my classmate."

"And, Nett, when you hear the footsteps of the tens of thousands of day-toilers wending their way homeward, how often have I sat at the window and watched them, tired and worn, but they were going home—call

me; I am going home, too; I am so tired."

Ere the little nurse could call her patient, she had answered the call of Him who said: "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."

If Anna Gould was beautiful in life, she was surpassingly beautiful in death.

Nett looked down upon the still form whence had flown the mysterious forces that had kept it astir; tears glistened upon the long, dark lashes that rested lightly upon the pale cheeks; the lips were parted with a half smile, as if the sufferer were about to say to that unseen Visitor whose presence it is said is a terror to all, "You are welcome."

Nett wondered with throbbing heart if Anna Gould could be called from that slumber would she care to come back to this world of sorrow and sin. Oh! no, she had paid the price. "The wages of sin is death."

Anna Gould was an only child; her father had died when she was but five months old, which left her to be reared by a loving and over-indulgent mother who withheld nothing from her that a poor working mother could give her child. She was very much spoiled.

She was beautiful, fair, with long, black



curly hair; and as she grew year by year she was considered an unusually brilliant child.

As the years slowly advanced and Anna passed from childhood to womanhood her beauty became fatal to her. She grew vain and haughty. Finding that most men were more readily fascinated by beauty than intelligence, she coerced herself into believing that her beauty was all that was necessary to help her obtain place and position. She entered the nurses' training school because her mother repeatedly insisted that she should do so. Had Mrs. Gould been able to have made a better introspection of her child's character, she would have kept her nearer and possibly saved her from much suffering and a premature grave.

After graduating, Anna said to her classmates: "Any one who wants to work at this profession may do so; I have no objections whatever. But I, for one, resign on the spot. It may be all right for some country 'Greenhorn' (referring to Nett), who would be glad to get a lift from the cotton patches or cornfields, but not for me." Several of the girls who heard the remark severely reprimanded her by saying that it was an outright insult to Nett.

"Now, girls, please don't quarrel over such

trifling remarks. As I said before, we are leaving soon, let us part as friends; who knows but we all might meet again?" said Nett.

Anna, turning scornfully away with a cold, haughty laugh, said, "I wonder who on earth will be so crazy to meet her again? I am sick of such a saint already."

"I don't think you should speak so, Anna; none of us know what we are coming to; we are all born, but not buried," said Lucy.

"What dunce doesn't know that, please tell me?" snapped Anna.

"You for one, it seems."

"Oh! when did you get to be so pious, Miss Dunn? I see you took care to let Nett be punished for your doings."

"Yes, Anna, you told Miss Wolf that Nett did it and I was such a coward and so afraid of you that I dared not say that you lied. Nevertheless, I have suffered more than she ever did, but I am glad she knows the truth now."

"Oh, then I suppose you squealed and let me in," said Anna, looking startled and frightened.

"No, I took all the blame myself."

"I am going or I shall be a fit subject for the insane asylum—listening to such qua-

kerism. If you ever meet me please don't let on that you ever knew me. I wouldn't want my set to know that I ever dabbled around with such old nuns."

"All right, Anna, be sure you won't need some of us first," answered Lucy.

Anna kept good her word. She often met the girls of her class, but seldom recognized them. Through her beauty she had gained admittance to the best social circles and dressed and lived far above the means of a poor girl.

While the other girls worked, Anna lived her life. She lived, dressed and associated with the best of people.

At length she became ill. For some time she lived with the hope of getting better, but each week she grew worse. She went to doctor after doctor, but each gave her little hope of recovering entirely. "We can patch you up to last a while, but at the best, we can give you but little hope," they would say. She was also advised to go away to the country or to the mountains to regain some of her lost strength.

Poor Anna, with her fading beauty and failing health, she was soon forgotten. She rented a little back room from a humble, but good Christian family. She took most of

her jewels and pawned them, and was astonished to find how expensive it was. It had been given to her by some of her most ardent admirers. They brought enough money to keep her for some time.

It was within the walls of that little room and in the home of those good people that this girl--after repeated daily meditations--realized the fruits of evil. It was hard for her to become submissive to her fate. Again and again she would say, "I am getting stronger," but instead she gradually grew weaker and weaker until at last she was too sick to leave her bed.

Here on her dying bed she passed before the awful judgment of God. "If I had only worked and lived an honest life, I would be willing to die young, but I cannot think of a single good deed that I have done," she said to Mrs. Hutt.

"But, do you know that God forgives everything—even the blackest sin?"

Anna could not be persuaded to accept this great promise of the Great Redeemer. "Do you believe that there is a hell worse than the one I am suffering? Oh! if my mother had warned me when I was just a babe of these things, I might have been better, she said to Mrs. Hutt, who reproved her by

saying:

"Anna, do not blame someone else, for you were a girl with good home training and well learned. You certainly must have seen something of the fruits of vice and sin during your training in the hospital. But it was your vanity that you let lead you into such a chasm."

"Anna did not answer for some time, then she said in a tone more meek than anyone had heard her speak, "You are right, Mrs. Hutt, I guess it was my own folly and haughtiness that has brought me to this."

After that day it was sad to see the dying girl preparing to leave this world. For weeks she suffered untold agonies. It was just a few days before she died that she realized that the strain was too great on Mrs. Hutt. Anna called her and asked her to write a letter for her to a nurse. "Ask her to call and see a very sick patient at the above address; don't sign any name. She will come; I shall only need her for a short time."

Poor Anna! She could not make up her mind to have any of the other girls that she knew, neither could she pay a private nurse, and she knew that Nett was doing charity work. She thought of the many mean

things she said to hurt her, but "I know if anyone can forgive me it is Nett Miller," she said.

During the latter part of the afternoon Anna heard Mrs. Hutt singing Nett's favorite hymn—"Does Jesus Care?" How often had she laughed at Nett whenever she sang it, but to-day, that hymn seemed as a spring of cooling water to her sin-burned soul. How she listened to hear Nett's footsteps! "I know she will come."

It was getting late and the sick girl had despaired of her coming that day when she heard the bell ring. "Yes, the same soft, sweet voice." Anna recognized it at once, although it had been years since she had seen her. The door opened quietly; the little white-clad nurse walked in and turned up the light.

"The same Nett, only her hair is graying and she looks a little tired, but O, so happy!" Nett went over the sick girl inch by inch—examining her thoroughly. Being sensitive to the slightest touch Anna felt more at ease during this examination than any previous one. Nett was so gentle! She handled her like a babe.

But a fear crept over her when she saw that Nett did not recognize her. "Can it be

possible that she still remembers what I said, or is it my condition? Although I know I said enough to hurt her, it will break my heart should Nett Miller fail me at this hour. I am dying; who would not forgive a dying woman!" Such were Anna's thoughts while Nett was examining her. After completing the examination and fixing her comfortably, Nett started to leave the room when Anna called her. It was then that she told her story.

Dear Reader: Do not forget that we always pay for the life we live. Do not let beauty bring you to Anna Gould's fate. Remember, beauty fascinates, but never holds.

What did Anna Gould give for a few perishable clothes and foolish pleasures? Her youth, her health, her virtue, her womanhood, a mother's love and confidence, loyal friends and a noble profession. And what did she receive in return? Sorrow and suffering and filled a premature grave.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REWARD

More than a year has passed since the death of Anna Gould; Nett had not ceased to work; she had seen the fruits of her labor. In all these years she had not taken more than a few day's vacation at a time; these days she usually spent on the farm with Silas and Margaret. Had it not been for this generous brother, Nett could have barely existed. He had never failed to send her a check each month; with this she was always comfortable. Both Silas and Margaret had tried to induce her to give up her work and come and live with them, but her answer was always "No, I cannot give them up yet."

Even when visiting here she did not get rest; her old friends were constantly calling or inviting her to their homes. Nothing they enjoyed better than recalling that afternoon in school when Nett made known her desire to become a trained nurse and an old maid. How they would laugh. "All of the

members of that class are married but you, Nett," they would say.

"Yes, I have realized both wishes," she would reply.

"But, Nett, you are so changed," said Mattie Reynolds (who we knew in an earlier chapter as Mattie King). Those eyes that held so much defiance in them are now so soft in their depths one can read sympathy and pity."

"Yes, dear girl, when you have seen as much suffering as I, you can feel both."

"And your hair is getting gray, too."

"You do not realize that I am getting old, do you?"

"Yes, but we can only think of you as little Nett," they would laughingly say.

One day, after a hard day's work, Nett felt unusually tired; her head ached dreadfully; as she walked home she made up her mind to attend a theatre that evening. St. Elmo was being played at one of the theatres and she wanted to see the play as she had read the book so often. "It will be a little recreation for me, I am so tired and lonely." She purchased a small bouquet of flowers to wear with her new pale gray satin dress which she had bought some time before, but had not worn.

After dressing, she pinned the flowers in her corsage. She found that she was ready an hour before time to leave so she decided to read a while.

She was hardly seated when there was a ring at the door. She heard a voice ask: "Is Miss Miller, the nurse, in?"

"Yes, but I think she is going out," said Mrs. Hart, the lady of the house, "but I will call her."

When Nett came down she found an anxious, worried-looking man pacing the hall. "Oh, nurse, will you come? My baby, my only child is dying; do come for God's sake, don't say 'no'," he said, when he saw the disappointed look on her face.

It was the first time during her career that she had to decide, but it was only for a moment. "I will come," she said in a soft, sweet voice.

"Nett went. All night long she stood by the bedside of the tiny, pain-racked sufferer, battling against death. For hours it seemed that death would win.

"The doctor will be here early in the morning; he had just left when I came for you. He could give me no hope," said the father.

"Well, nurse, how is she?"

Nett was surprised to look and see Dr.

Lionel. "Very sick, doctor, but I feel there is hope."

Dr. Lionel left rigid instructions. "If there is any hope, it remains with the nursing." He did not fear, for he knew Nett Miller would leave nothing undone. Three days and nights, and the crisis was passed.

"Thank God, she will live!" said the nurse, as she saw the change. She had neither slept nor eaten; hardly five minutes had she left the bedside. As Dr. Lionel entered the bedroom that evening, Nett said, "She lives, thank God, she lives——" and fainted.

Knowing that the baby was out of danger, the doctor turned his entire attention to the nurse. She was soon revived. "I guess I am a little tired," she said.

"Nett—Miss Miller, I am going to phone Mrs. Kempt; you are going there to rest and from there to the country—not home by no means, but somewhere where you can rest without entertaining or being entertained. You have done your duty—double duty," he said.

Nett lay and listened to his orders. She had given orders for years, but to-day orders were being given to her. She accepted his orders and said, "Yes, doctor, I feel too tired to go on."

That night she was made comfortable in Attorney and Mrs. Kempt's home. They told her that they wished she would stay with them all ways.

As Dr. Lionel was leaving he said, "Remember, Miss Miller, you are off duty until I give you orders to go back again." Then he added, "I saw that night when I entered the sick room that you were too tired to take the case, but I knew nothing could convince you of the fact but a complete breakdown or something like this." Nett marveled at herself for being so obedient.

Nett did not think it unusual that Dr. Lionel called every day, but she looked forward to the time that he would call with an interest that was deeper than professional. When she left for the country, Dr. Lionel asked her to write and inform him of how she was improving. "I shall come to see you as often as is possible."

One day he motored out in his new roadster and took Nett for a long drive through the country. "I am getting back to my old self again; I shall soon be able to go back to my people, don't you think, doctor?" Seeing that the doctor did not answer, she continued: "I feel better than I have for a long

time, and Oh, I miss them so much." Dr. Lionel saw that if he did not speak now there would be no hope when once Nett got back to work, so he told her his long story; how he had waited for her to taste both the joys and sorrows of the course that she had so nobly chosen; how he had watched her give the love (that he had hoped some day would be his) to hundreds of sick, unfortunate and poverty-stricken people. "Ten long years have I worked and waited, the thought of you always foremost in my mind, has made me a good man. During my practice many homes have been open to me; men have trusted their wives and daughters into my care; I can truthfully say, until now, not once have I betrayed their trust. Not that I was not tempted (because men of my profession have enough of that before them), but these men paid me their hard-earned wages; I ministered to them, still I depended on them for my livelihood. I fought hard not to yield to things so low."

"Nett, I have loved as few men ever love; often I have tried to shut you out of my mind, but your shadow seemed ever before me. This great love has made me unselfish. I could not take you away from the work which needed you so much; you have

given them ten years of your life—will you give me the rest?”

Nett's eyes filled with tears; through them shone unexpressible happiness, for love is a good woman's idea of a great reward; no fame, position or wealth can bring to her more happiness than to be truly loved and honored by a good man.

Years afterward, Nett said: “It was worth the trouble; the struggle, the hours of loneliness, the sacrifice and the love I gave to them because I got so much in return—a good husband.”

And Dr. Lionel said: “I wish every young man could see through the eyes of virtue; I can never express in language its worth.”

After their marriage, Dr. Lionel forbade Nett to even help him in his office, which she wanted so much to do. “No, dear, you must rest. You have worked long enough for a while at least.” Nett did not try to argue with him because she knew he was right.

When they were married a little over a year a little daughter was born to them. The baby took much of Nett's time, but she divided her love—she was too sensible to let the baby take her entire attention away from the husband and father as most young moth-

ers do. Dr. Lionel said: "When I found out there was to be a baby, I was glad, but I could almost see myself as lonely as I was before I was married. I have seen so many cases where the baby completely changed the home because the mother forgot everything except the baby. I had prepared myself for such a change, but, Nett, you have managed so well that we both have gotten full share of your love."

"Yes, Walter, I have often discussed such cases with my friends, and have repeatedly said it was a mistake that could be easily avoided if the mother was careful. I have said also that the wife and husband should always put each other before the children. This may seem hard, but it should be done. Children grow up and, however much we love them, they leave home. I tried when little Nett was born to avoid this error."

"You have not only tried, but you have done so, Nett," said her husband, affectionately.

When little Nett was four years old and was going to the kindergarten, Nett became very lonely. Dr. Lionel noticed this and when he questioned her, she said, "I suppose I have rested so much until I am tired of resting; the baby is going to school and you

are busy; I am most of the time alone."

Dr. Lionel made no reply, but while making his calls that day he thought seriously over what she had said and decided to let her help him one afternoon and evening each week.

On his return that evening he told Nett of his proposition. She was very much pleased and said, "You are the dearest man alive, Walter."

In a few weeks he noticed a decided change in her. The bloom returned to her face and there was a complete return of the old self. "I believe she would have died had I kept her from her work much longer," he thought.

It was soon known that Nett was helping in the office every Wednesday. On that day the waiting rooms would be overcrowded. So many persons called for her that the doctor decided to let her help him a little each day. How she worked! Nett was in her "Seventh Heaven."

Early one morning she got a check from Silas for several thousand dollars; it was accompanied by a little note, saying:

"Dear Nett: Enclosed is a check from Margaret and me. We want you to take

this, and with it do the thing that will bring you the most happiness. Spend all of this for that one thing. We shall forward this amount to you yearly for that cause, whatever it may be.

“Very truly yours,

“SILAS and MARGARET.”

When she told her husband, he said, “It is yours; do whatever you wish with it.”

No painter could paint, nor bards write, nor psalmodists sing of the supreme joy that swept through her heart as she stood with this gift in her hand. It had been her wish, her hope, her day dream—some day to erect a building where women could go to get free medical treatment from the best women doctors and nurses obtainable, and remain there until they became capable of caring for themselves. But she never thought that she would ever be able to do that thing herself. Dr. Lionel told her that she could not do a better thing. “I do not know of anything that would be more appreciated by the people or bring you more happiness,” he said.

In answer to Silas’ letter that evening she said: “I have tried every word in the English language to express my happiness and thankfulness, but I cannot find one. So I

shall let you see in the near future that which I most desire."

Some months later at a certain hospital workmen were busy building an annex to the main building. Many had already heard it was Miss Nett's—as she was generally called—gift to the hospital. The interior of the building was beautifully finished. Nett purposely had this building made more home-like than an ordinary hospital, so that the patients would feel more satisfied to stay. There was a beautiful rest room with a large, open fireplace and handsome book-case containing many interesting books by Colored authors; a large dining room, a sun parlor and a small lecture room to grace the first floor.

Nett directed all the most important arrangements. The staff was composed of the best women doctors and nurses she could secure. To these she gave her orders: "There must be no hurrying here; each patient must receive full justice of your ability and knowledge.

"There must be patience exerted by all. You must not only be able to administer professionally, but also be able to give encouragement to the least hopeful.

"It is my urgent request that these orders be strictly followed."

Nett had advertised for a special nurse; she had just heard several applicants when she was surprised to find the last one was Miss Dunn. The two girls clasped hands; for a few moments there were no words. "And we meet again," said Katie. "Yes," answered Nett, smiling.

Nett called one of the doctors and said: "We need look no further because I have found the nurse who is capable of filling this position; we can give the general management entirely into her care." "Goodness! Nett, you don't know whether I came for a position or as a patient."

"I am taking it for granted. One look at you would readily convince us that you are not applying for medical treatment."

"Well, looks don't always tell, you know, Nett, and besides you don't know whether I would accept the position," said Katie Dunn.

"That is why I am accepting it for you," she replied.

"And do you think I can worthily fill the position? Suppose I might break some of the rules?"

"Now, Katie, I will not have any 'sup-

poses'; I know more about the incident that you are referring to than you do. We will say nothing more about it. let 'the dead past bury its dead., "

Katie took the position. She became a frequent visitor at the home of Dr. Lionel; they spent many happy hours together.

After the building was completed, Nett wrote asking Silas and Margaret to come and see what a beautiful diamond she had bought with her gift. They were both puzzled at Nett's letter. "Think of Nett buying diamonds and inviting us all the way to Philadelphia to see it! Why, jewelry was the last thing I would have thought of her buying," said Silas.

"Why Silas, that was perfectly all right; we told her to buy whatever she wanted most, did we not?"

"Yes, but it seems so odd for *her*, Margaret."

"That means that you don't quite understand women. We are all odd; some a little more so than others."

"But the thing I want to know is, are we going."

"Yes, if my sister has taken that money and bought diamonds, it is worth going to the end of the world to see," said Silas so

seriously that Margaret nearly laughed herself into hysterics.

"I can't see anything so funny, Margaret (impatiently)."

"Dear, don't be angry, I couldn't help laughing, you seem so disappointed."

They left for the city a few days later, arriving there early in the morning. Nett and her husband talked of many different things, but neither said anything of the diamonds. This puzzled them more than ever.

It was late in the afternoon when Nett suggested that they all go driving in the car with Dr. Lionel when he went to make his calls. When Dr. Lionel stopped in front of the hospital, Margaret said, "How well I remember this place." "Would you like to go in?" asked Nett.

"Very much, indeed, Nett; and I am sure Silas will be glad to see once more the place where you obtained the knowledge of your profession and spent many years of hard work."

As they started up to the main entrance Margaret saw the new annex and exclaimed, "O, they have erected a new building—I didn't know that."

"Come, we'll go in and see it," said Nett.

When they entered the beautiful rest

room, Margaret stood with clasped hands, "isn't this wonderful?" she exclaimed. "I never saw anything so well arranged in my life." Both she and Silas admired the place. "Have my parents seen it, Nett?"

"No, it has been completed only a week and we intend to invite the public to a formal opening later, and I hope to have your father as one of the speakers."

"How do you like it, brother?"

"I think it is great, Nett."

Then Nett said, "I am glad that you both like my 'diamond.'"

Silas and Margaret stood looking amazed at their sister.

"This is the diamond I wrote and asked you to come and see."

"Well, Margaret, this solves the puzzle."

"Silas could not understand why on earth you would buy a diamond with the money," Margaret explained.

"Yes, it did seem queer to me because I had secretly thought of something like this, we might have over-estimated what it was like."

Hundreds of women visited this part of the hospital weekly. It was said this was the hospital owned and controlled by Colored people where women were properly

treated by doctors of their own race and sex.

Nett made three weekly visits to the hospital; two afternoons she set apart to lecture to boys and girls between twelve and sixteen years of age. She gave a series of lectures on Ethics and Care of Self; she considered this a most important part of a child's education which she found so badly neglected during her time as slum district and community nurse.

In addition to this, she issued pamphlets appealing to parents to eliminate all false modesty and teach their children the things that they should know ere they reach the age of puberty; thus preventing the ruination of so many young lives—that we may have a cleaner and stronger generation in the future.

So to Nett Miller-Lionel, may she

“Reap her joys in the sweet bye and bye,
By the seed she sows today.”

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO GREAT MEN MEET

The Frenn, Silas Miller's beautiful home, surrounded by trees and shrubbery, stood in magnificent splendor upon a hill with its beautiful lawns sloping towards the main road. It was considered the most complete estate in that section of the country. One could hardly recognize it as being the same place that he purchased immediately after his first big sale, twenty-six years previous.

It was a beautiful day in the latter part of June; it had been very hot and sultry; the sun was slowly wending her way toward the western horizon, while a cooling breeze gently blew across the lawn. Silas walked up and down the broad piazza with his hands folded behind him, apparently in deep thought. Taking a closer look at him we find him the same shrewd, keen, conscientious man now as in earlier years. His once dark hair is graying. Everywhere one could see wealth and success. He looks and is happy. A portly, pleasant faced woman

came out on the porch and called, "Daddy, dear, are you having a cake-walk out here all alone?"

"No, dear; I am thinking."

"Of what, please tell me?"

"Of you."

"Oh, Silas, for goodness sake don't you ever get tired of flattering me? Do respect my old age and gray hair," said Mrs. Miller, laughingly.

"But, dear, Margaret, do you know that it was just twenty-six years ago this month that three of the happiest events that ever occurred in my life took place? I had my first big sale, you became my promised wife, and Nett was graduated from the nurses' training school."

"At that time I thought you were the dearest girl alive."

"And do you think of me now?"

Walking over to her, he took her face between his hands and looking deep into her eyes he said, "at that time I *thought*, but now I know."

In all these years Silas never forgot to give her the praise that a wife so hungers for; she was his partner and companion. He had always thanked God for giving him such a good woman. With her he had pass-

ed the twenty-sixth milestone of married life; she had helped him to bridge many difficulties that mark the path of man striving to reach success ere life's evening tinges his brow with sunset glow.

Silas Miller stood and looked back over that path, and vividly recalled the source from which all his success had sprung. He said, "Margaret, I was thinking of what one writer said: 'Our chief want in life is someone to make us do what we can do.'"

"If Mr. Baxter had not continued to call me a 'nigger' I would have been working for him or someone else today. At that time that word seemed to me to be the worst word that could be uttered by human lips of a civilized individual.

"I have learned that when we help ourselves, others will help us. It has been a great misunderstanding among many persons of our race that the white man hates us; but I have found that the intelligent white man honors and respects the intelligent and prosperous black man.

"After I had got started and he saw that I meant to go on, who gave me more encouragement than Mr. Baxter? He not only purchased stock from me yearly, but sent many other farmers to me."

Although rich and prosperous, Silas was much beloved by all. The white people honored him because of his ability and worth; the colored people loved him because he was their very own. The boys of his schooldays—now men—gathered annually to renew the vow they made years ago. Then, there were twenty-eight; now there are only ten living.

Mr. and Mrs. Kempt had visited the farm often. After the first visit, Mrs. Kempt said to her husband, "Henry. I am glad you were firm in your decision that we should let Margaret choose her own husband. Nothing but your firmness would have made me give over at that time; but I am so glad that you took matters into your own hands, or our child might have been very unhappy. Leonard Morgan has already been twice divorced, and is now said to be infatuated with some young actress."

"That is the reason why I urged that she be let alone. I had helped to untie so many unhappy marriages that I did not want to sit and listen to someone untie my daughter's."

They had had their wish; they had seen their daughter's children. While she was not a society leader she was a true wife, a

good mother and a happy woman. What more could parents wish?

Now they slept the sleep from which none ever awakes.

Aunt Mollie Noble who had grown old and feeble had repeatedly said of Margaret, "She does beat anything ah ever seen. I doan say dat Silas did bad after all." Margaret often visited Aunt Mollie. In spite of all Aunt Mollie had said, they became warm friends. When she was very sick, and dying, Margaret went every day to see her and took her nourishing food. She marveled at the great child-like faith the dying woman had in God; when in great pain, she would say, "De Lord doan put any more on his chill'n den dey's able to bear." And just before she died she whispered, "I'se goin' home, Mis' Margaret."

Dr. Lionel and Nett visited the farm as often as was convenient; they could never stay long as his large and extensive practice demanded their time in the city.

Silas' two younger sons had completed the Agriucultural course at Tuskegee and were working with their father.

The two older ones had attended school in the North; one was graduated from law school and the other was State Instructor

in canning fruits and vegetables in the State of Texas.

Silas and Margaret were proud of their children. He had never ceased to be chums with them since that day Margaret called his attention to his unintentional neglect of them.

He had just finished saying to Margaret, "I wish I could show hundreds of young men of my race the way to success."

"Yes, dear, but you cannot do it by yourself; it will take the co-operation of the people of the race. We can do our best; but time and the evolution of circumstances will bring about that which we so earnestly desire. As it is, we see a nation rising slowly up out of the dust—with most most of its future before it."

"Yes, Margaret, and we should be proud to be members of that race; and I shall—."

A beautiful car turned into the lane and came slowly toward the house. Silas took his hat and went down to see who his new visitors were. One gentleman had gotten out and had turned to assist an elderly, white-haired man out.

"Hello, there, Miller."

"Why, it's Mr. Baxter," said Silas. "It has been several years since I saw you."

"I am indeed glad to see you," said Mr. Baxter, shaking hands. "Do you know who this is?"

Silas looked and then exclaimed, "Why, it's Mr. Walker."

Both men clasped hands as only men do when they are truly glad to meet.

"And you know me!"

"Know you! Could I forget the man who gave me the first money and the first encouragement to start in life? This is the fruit of your encouragement and my labor," he said, with a sweep of his hand.

Walking to the porch he called Margaret, and in introducing her, said, "Mr. Walker, this is my jewel!"

Both men laughed heartily. Their visit was short; Mr. Walker was getting old and could not stay out late.

Preparing to leave he shook hands, saying, "You've done well, Miller; I shall not come East again; I am getting too old to travel. My days are nearly done. Good-bye, and may God bless you with a long life to enjoy the fruits of your labors."

As they drove down the beautiful drive, both men lifted their hats and said good-bye.

In the vanishing twilight, Silas and Mar-

garet walked slowly back to the porch.

Silas Miller had made good his vows:
“And—we’ll take off our hats to each other.”

THE END.



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